THE HISTORY

OF

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

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INTRODUCTORY LESSONS

ON

THE HISTORY

OF

RELIGIOUS WORSHIP.

BEING A SEQUEL TO THE

'LESSONS ON CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES'

BY RICHARD WHATELY, D.D.

LATE ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

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PREFACE.

THE DESIGN of this little book (as well as of the LESSONS ON EVIDENCES, to which it is a Sequel) is, partly, to supply young students with an *Introduction* to larger Works on the same, most important, subjects; and partly, to provide something of a *substitute* for those Works, for any one who has not opportunities and leisure for reading them.

It may also be convenient to those who have already read some of those Works, to have before them a short *summary* of a few of the principal points therein treated of.

In reference to several of the points noticed in these Lessons, difficulties may be started, and objections raised, and further explanations called for, by some readers. And to have inserted all such explanations and solutions as might have been thought needful, would have made the Work

unsuitable, both in length and in its whole character, for the purpose it was designed for.

It has been thought better, therefore, to give references, partly in foot-notes, and partly at the end of each Lesson, to the Works from which this has been chiefly compiled, and to others which may be consulted with advantage in reference to the several subjects treated of.

N.B.—The reader will please to observe, that in these LESSONS (as in those of each former series), a word or phrase enclosed within square [brackets] is to be understood as *equivalent* to the preceding.

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PART I.

FROM THE CREATION TO THE END OF THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

LESSON I.

MANKIND ORIGINALLY INSTRUCTED FROM HEAVEN.

§ 1.

Origin of true and of false religions.

It was remarked in the Lessons on Evidences, that as Christianity did not always exist, our forefathers, and those of all other Christians, must have been *converted* to that religion from some other; either from Paganism—that is, the worship of false gods,—or else from Judaism—the religion taught by the true God to the Israelites, and which was designed to prepare the way for Christianity.

Now it is natural that you should next inquire—and the inquiry is a very useful one—how the pagan religions arose; and whether mankind, or the greater part of mankind, were originally left to themselves, to devise any kind of religious worship they could,

out of their own imaginations, or whether they had originally some true revelation among them, which they forgot, or corrupted, so as to fall into the idolatry and the various superstitions which have prevailed in most parts of the world.

And it is also a very interesting and a very important inquiry, what corruptions have at any time crept into a religion originally from Heaven: because it is our part to be ourselves on our guard against such corruptions. It is not enough that we should profess and believe in the Divine origin of Christianity, without being also careful to distinguish pure Christianity, as it was left us by our Divine Master and his Apostles, from any errors and superstitions that may have been mixed up with it by men.

§ 2.

Accounts in Genesis of the first Divine communication to man.

The earliest history of mankind, by far, that we possess, is that contained in the book of Genesis. It is extremely brief and scanty, especially the earliest portion of it. But it plainly represents the first of the human race—Adam and Eve, when in the Garden of Eden—as receiving direct communications from God. We have no detailed account, however, of the instruction they received; and even part of what the history does record is but obscurely hinted. For example, it is rather hinted than expressly stated, that the use of LANGUAGE was im-

parted to them by revelation. This, however, is generally understood to be the meaning of the passage (Gen. ch. ii. v. 20) in which it is said that God brought unto Adam the beasts and birds, to see what he would call them, and that Adam gave them names.

Mankind not originally left in the savage state.

But our first parents, or their children, must have received direct from God a great deal of instruction of which no particulars are related. For besides being taught something of religious and moral duty, as appears from Genesis (ch. ii., v. 16, and iv. 7), it is evident that they must also have learnt something of the arts of life. The first generations of mankind were certainly not left at all in the condition of mere *savages*, subsisting on such wild fruits and animals as they might chance to meet with. We read concerning the first two sons of Adam (Gen. iv.), that the one was occupied in tilling the ground, and the other in keeping cattle.

§ 3.

Impossibility of man unaided attaining civilization.

Indeed, even independently of the Bible-history, without taking into account anything that we read in that, we might draw the same conclusion from what is matter of actual experience, and, as it were, before our eyes at this day. For it appears that mere savages, if left to themselves without any instruction, never did, and never

can, civilize themselves. And consequently the *first* of the human race that did acquire any degree of civilization, since they could not have had instruction from other men, must have had a *super*human instructor. But for such an instructor, all mankind would have been savages at this day. The mere fact that civilized men do exist, is enough to prove, even to a person who had never heard of the Bible, that at some time or other, men must have been taught something by some superior Being; in other words, that there must have been a *revelation*.

Mistakes respecting the origin of civilization.

Some persons are accustomed to talk as if savages could, and sometimes did, invent for themselves, one by one, all the useful arts, and thus raise themselves to a civilized state, without any assistance from men already civilized. One may meet with fine descriptions—though altogether fanciful—of this supposed progress of men towards civilization. One man, it has been supposed, wishing to save himself the trouble of roaming through the woods in search of wild fruits and roots, would bethink himself of collecting the seeds of these, and cultivating them in a spot of ground cleared and broken up for the purpose. And finding that he could thus raise more than enough for himself, he might agree with some of his neighbours to let them have a part of the produce in exchange for some of the game and fish they might have taken. Another man, again, it has been supposed, would endeavour to save himself the labour and uncertainty of hunting, by

catching some kinds of wild animals alive, and keeping them in an enclosure to breed, that he might have a supply always at hand.

And again, another, it is supposed, might devote himself to the occupation of dressing skins for clothing, or of building huts, or canoes, or making various kinds of tools; and might subsist by exchanging these with his neighbours for food. And by thus devoting his chief attention to some one kind of manufacture, he would acquire increased skill in that, and would strike out useful new inventions.

Thus, these supposed savages having gradually come to be divided into husbandmen, shepherds, and artisans of various kinds, would begin to enjoy the various advantages of *a division of labour*, and would advance, step by step, in all the arts of civilized life.

§ 4.

Savages incapable of improving themselves.

Now all this description is likely to appear plausible at the first glance to those who do not inquire carefully, and reflect attentively. But on examination, it will be found to be contradicted by all history, and to be quite inconsistent with the real character of such beings as savages actually are. In reality, such a process of inventions and improvements as that just described, is what never did, and never possibly can, take place in any savage tribe left wholly to themselves.

Traditions respecting the origin of civilization.

All the nations of which we know anything, that have risen from a savage to a civilized state, appear to have had the advantage of the instruction and example of civilized men living among them. Every nation that has ever had any tradition of a time when their ancestors were savages, and of the first introduction of civilization among them, always represent some foreigner, or some Being from Heaven as having first taught them the arts of life.

Thus, the ancient Greeks attributed to Prometheus —a supposed superhuman Being—the introduction of the use of fire. And they represented Triptolemus and Cadmus, and others, strangers, from a distant country, as introducing agriculture and other arts. And the Peruvians have a like tradition concerning a person they call Manco-Capac, whom they represent as the offspring of the sun, and as having taught useful arts to their ancestors.

Testimony of voyagers.

On the other hand, there are great numbers of savage tribes, in various parts of the world, who have had no regular intercourse with civilized men, but who have been visited by several voyagers, at different times, and, in some instances, at very distant periods. And it appears from comparing together the accounts of those voyagers that these tribes remain perfectly stationary, not making the smallest advance towards civilization.

For example, the people of the vast continent of New Holland, and of the large island of Papua (or

New Guinea), which lies near it, who are among the rudest of savages, appear to remain (in those parts not settled by Europeans) in exactly the same brutish condition as when they were first discovered. They roam about the forests in search of wild animals, and of some few eatable roots, which they laboriously dig up with sharpened sticks. But though they are often half starved, and though they have to expend as much toil for three or four scanty meals of these roots as would suffice for breaking up and planting a piece of ground that would supply them for a year, it has never occurred to them to attempt cultivating those roots.

The inhabitants, again, of the islands of Andaman, in the Eastern Ocean, appear to be in a more degraded and wretched state than even the New Hollanders.

The New Zealanders, again, in the interval of above 125 years between the first discovery of their islands by Tasman, and the second discovery by Captain Cook, seem to have made no advances whatever, but to have remained just in the same condition. And yet they were in a far less savage state than that of the New-Hollanders, being accustomed rudely to cultivate the ground, and raise crops of sweet-potatoes.

And such appears to be, from all accounts, the condition of all savage, or nearly savage tribes. They seem never to *invent* anything, or to make any effort to improve; so that what few arts they do possess, (and which, in general, are only such as to enable

them just to support life), must be the remnant that they have retained from a more civilized state from which their ancestors had degenerated.

§ 5.

Origin of mistakes respecting the condition of savages.

When, indeed, men have arrived at a certain stage in the advance towards civilization (far short of what exists in Europe), it is then possible for them, if nothing occurs to keep them back, to advance further and further towards a more civilized state.

And there is no *one* of the arts that may not be invented by men whose minds have been already cultivated up to a certain point.

Those, for example, who have been accustomed to work in one kind of metal, may discover the use of some other metal. Those who are accustomed to till the ground, and whose faculties have received some considerable degree of improvement, may introduce the culture of some new vegetable. And if men have been used to make woollen cloth, they may proceed from that to linen or cotton cloth; or, on the other hand, they may proceed from linen to woollen.

And this it is that misleads some persons in their notions respecting savages. For, finding that there is no *one* art which might not have been invented by unassisted man, supposing him to *have a certain degree of civilization to start from*, they hence con-

clude that unassisted man might have invented *all* the arts, supposing him *left originally in a completely savage state.* But this is contradicted by all experience; which shows that men in the condition of the lowest savages never have made the first step towards civilization, without some assistance from without.

Human society may be compared to some combustible substances which will not take fire spontaneously, but when once set on fire, will burn with continually increasing force. A community of men requires, as it were, to be kindled, and requires no more.

§ 6.

Real character of savages.

Perhaps, when you try to fancy yourself in the situation of a savage, it occurs to you that you would set your mind to work to contrive means for bettering your condition; and that you might perhaps hit upon such and such useful inventions; and hence you may be led to think it natural that savages should do so, and that some tribes of them may have advanced themselves in the way above described, without any external help. But nothing of the kind appears to have ever really occurred; and what leads some persons to fancy it is, that they themselves are *not* savages, but have some degree of mental cultivation, and some of the habits of thought of civilized men; and therefore they form to themselves an incorrect notion of what a savage really is—just as

a person who possesses eyesight, cannot understand correctly the condition of one born blind.

But those who have seen a good deal of real savages, have observed that they are not only feeble in mental powers, but also sluggish in the use of such powers as they have, except when urged by pressing want. When not thus urged, they pass their time either in perfect inactivity, or else in dancing, in decorating their bodies with paint, or with feathers and shells, or in various childish sports. They are not only brutishly stupid, but still more remarkable for childish thoughtlessness and improvidence. So that it never occurs to them to consider how they may put themselves in a better condition a year or two hence.

Existence of civilization a confirmation of Scripture history.

Now such must have been the condition of all mankind down to this day, if they had all been, from the first, left without any instruction, and in what is called a *state of nature*—that is, with the faculties man is born with, not at all unfolded or exercised by education. For, from such a state, unassisted man cannot, as all experience shows, ever raise himself. And consequently, in that case, the whole world would have been peopled with mere savages in the very lowest state of degradation. The very existence, therefore, at this day, of civilized men, proves that there must have been, at some time or other, some instruction given to man in the arts of life, by some Being superior to man. For, since the *first beginnings* of

civilization could not have come from any *human* instructor, they must have come from one *super*-human.

§ 7.

Man wholly untaught, incapable of subsisting.

It has been shown then, that the whole world would now have been peopled with the very lowest savages, if men had never received any instruction, and yet had been able to subsist at all. But it is doubtful whether even this bare subsistence would have been possible. It is more likely that the first generation would all have perished for want of those few arts which even savages possess, and which (as has been above remarked) were probably not *invented* by savages, but are remnants which they have retained from a more civilized state. The knowledge, for instance, of wholesome and of poisonous roots and fruits, the arts of making fish-hooks and nets, bows and arrows, or darts, and snares for wild animals, and of constructing rude huts, and canoes, and some other such simple arts, are possessed, more or less, by all savages, and are necessary to enable them to support their lives. And it is doubtful whether men left completely in a state of nature—that is, wholly untaught—would not all perish before they could invent them for themselves.

Inferiority of man to the brutes in instincts.

For, we should remember that man, when left in a state of nature, untaught, and with his rational powers not unfolded, is far less fitted for supporting

and taking care of himself than the brutes. *They* are much better provided both with *instincts* and with bodily *organs*, for supplying their own wants. For example, those animals that have occasion to dig, either for food, or to make burrows for shelter — such as the swine, the hedgehog, the mole, and the rabbit, have both an *instinct* for digging, and snouts or paws far better adapted for that purpose than man's hands. Yet man is enabled to turn up the ground much better than any brute; but then this is by means of spades and other *tools*, which man can be taught to make and use, though brutes cannot. Again, birds and bees have an instinct for building such nests and habitations as answer their purpose as well as the most commodious beds and houses made by men; but man has no instinct that teaches him how to construct these. Brutes, again, know by instinct their proper food, and avoid what is unwholesome; but man has no instinct for distinguishing the night-shade-berry* (with which children have often been poisoned) from unwholesome fruits. And quadrupeds swim by nature, because their swimming is the same motion by which they advance when on land: but a man, falling into deep water, is drowned, unless he has *learnt* to swim.

It appears, then, very doubtful whether men left wholly untaught, would be able to subsist at all, even

* The berry of the deadly nightshade (not the woody nightshade common in hedges) looks like a black cherry, and has a sweet taste, and no unpleasant smell.

in the state of the lowest savages. But at any rate, it is plain they could never have risen *above* that state. And consequently the existence of civilization at this day is a kind of *monument* attesting the fact that some instruction from above must, at some time or other, have been supplied to mankind. And the most probable conclusion is, that man when first created, or very shortly afterwards, was advanced, by the Creator himself, to a state above that of a mere savage.

Original Divine instruction proved by the existence of civilized Man.

Now this is exactly what is told in Scripture. But you should observe that the proof which has been just given of an original revelation to Man, is quite independent of the Bible-history, and therefore tends to confirm that history. That man could not have *made* himself, is appealed to as a proof of a Divine *Creator*. And that mankind could not, in the first instance, have *civilized* themselves, is a proof exactly of the same kind, and equally strong, of a superhuman *Instructor*.

§ 8.

Causes of degeneracy into the Savage state.

And here perhaps you may be disposed to inquire how it ever came about that various tribes of men, from time to time, degenerated into the savage state. We have no distinct records of the progress of this degeneracy; nor, from the nature of the case, is it possible that

we should. But, no doubt, *wars* have always been the principal cause of it. When men were continually harassed by a superior force of ferocious enemies, who hunted them down like wild beasts, and burnt their dwellings, and laid waste the country, they would be driven to shelter themselves in forests, and deserts, and mountains; and would have no opportunity of practising, or of teaching to their children, most of the arts they might be acquainted with. Agriculture, for instance, would necessarily be abandoned. And being entirely occupied in a struggle for bare subsistence, and in providing for defence against their enemies, or for escape, they would have neither leisure, nor means, nor inclination, for keeping up the various arts of civilized life. These therefore would, in two or three generations, be forgotten, and irrecoverably lost among them; and the whole character of the people would have degenerated.

We have said that, from the very nature of the case, it is impossible we should have any distinct accounts of the progress of this degradation, since men so situated would not compose histories. But it is remarkable that in several Savage Tribes there are some faint traditions of their ancestors having formerly come from some distant and better country, doubtless driven out by war.

§ 9.

Origin and progress of the Arts.

It is likely that the instruction in the arts of life that was originally bestowed on the human race, was merely sufficient to give them a *beginning*; to advance them just so far towards civilization as to enable them, thenceforward, to advance themselves, and to invent, one by one, by the exercise of their own faculties, various arts, according to their wants and opportunities.

The Bible-history informs us of hardly any particulars, either of what was originally taught to mankind, or of their own inventions. We have only a very brief and slight hint of the invention of the art of working metals, and of musical instruments; and, perhaps, also of tents. (Gen. ch. iv., v. 20.) But doubtless many other arts were invented before the Flood.

Several of the most important arts, and of those most generally known throughout the world, must have been very ancient; and as their first introduction is not mentioned in the Bible, there is no record or tradition of it. And we are so familiar with these, that we are apt to regard them as more simple and obvious than they are; though, on reflection, it will appear that some of them were most likely invented gradually, and by successive steps, taken at long intervals.

For example, to cultivate certain plants bearing small seeds—to rub these seeds to a powder between

stones,—to work this powder into a paste with water —and then to bake this paste by fire; and again, to draw milk from various animals—to steep in this a part of a calf's stomach, in order to separate the solid part from the liquid—and then to press, salt, and dry that solid,—all these processes of art were probably devised gradually, and at long intervals, and by several different inventors, and after many experiments and failures, of all which we have no records. But no thought of all this will usually occur to a peasant who is making this meal of *bread and cheese*. The substances are so familiar to him that it never occurs to him to consider how they were first introduced.

§ 10.

Advantage of great longevity to the earliest generations.

It is worth observing how important an advantage, in reference to the invention of arts, would have been afforded to men in a very early and rude state of society, by their possessing (as Scripture informs us the earliest of them did) a very long continuance of life. In the present day, an ingenious and observant man *writes* down, and generally prints and publishes, the experiments and observations he has made; and thus those who come after him are enabled to follow up his inquiries and attempts; so that each generation improves upon the last. But, before the use of printing and writing, the chief part of each man's experience would

be lost to those who came after him. In those early days, therefore, it was of vast importance, with a view to the invention of arts, that each man should be enabled, by great length of life, to apply his own experience, and to follow up, himself, the discoveries he might have made.

Tree of Life.

We have no direct information as to the immediate cause of the great longevity of the earliest generations of men. But it seems likely that it may have been produced by the influence of *The Tree of Life.*

That the produce of this Tree (whether its fruits, or its leaves) was endued by the Creator with some property of warding off death, we are plainly taught, both by its name, and by the exclusion of Adam from the Garden of Eden, 'lest he should eat of the Tree of Life, and live for ever.' It is likely that it had the medicinal virtue, when applied from time to time, of preventing or curing the decays of old age: just as our ordinary food preserves men from dying of exhaustion by famine; and as several well-known medicines prevent or cure certain diseases. We know indeed that there does not exist, now, any medicine that has the virtue of keeping up or renewing youthful health or vigour. But such a medicine would not be, in itself, at all more strange than many things which we are familiar with, but whose effects we cannot explain, and could never have conjectured.

For example, that opium, and some other drugs, should produce sleep, and strong liquors a kind of

temporary madness, is what no one would ever have thought of, if he had never heard of it, nor seen the experiment tried, of swallowing those substances. Nor, even if he were a skilful chemist, would he be able, by analysing them, to conjecture what their effects would be.

If, then, the Tree of Life were such a medicine as we have supposed, a person who always continued the use of it from time to time, would continue exempt from decay and death.

But supposing some persons who had been in the habit of using it (as our first parents probably had, since there was nothing to prevent them) should afterwards *cease* to use it, their constitution would probably have been so far fortified, that, though they would at length die, yet they would live much *longer* than man's natural term. And they would even be likely to transmit to their descendants such a constitution as would confer on those also a great degree of longevity; which would only wear out gradually, in many successive generations.

Now it is remarkable that this exactly agrees with what we do find recorded. If you look into those parts of the Bible-history which relate to this subject, you will find man's life in the earliest generations extending to eight or nine centuries, and upwards. And you will find longevity gradually and slowly diminishing in each generation down to the times of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived rather less than 200 years; and again, down to the times of Moses, who began his mission, apparently

in the full vigour of life, at fourscore, and lived to 120. Joshua, who succeeded him, lived 110 years. And from thenceforward human life appears to have been brought down to about its present limit.

The above seems to be the most clear, easy, and natural interpretation of those parts of Scripture we have been examining. There is not, however, any such distinct revelation on the subject as to authorise our pronouncing confidently that such must be the right interpretation, and making this an article of faith.

§ 11.

Religious instruction given to the earliest generations.

With respect to religious instruction, although, as has been said, the Maker and Governor of all things did certainly make Himself known to the earliest generations of mankind, and accepted worship from them, we are told very few particulars of the revelations that were made. We find indeed a prophecy made to Adam and Eve, just before their expulsion from Paradise, that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head. But whether any explanation was given them of the reference this had to our Saviour's triumph over Satan and Death, we are not told. And it is even a matter of doubt among the learned whether the sacrifices that were offered up in the earliest times, and afterwards by Noah [Gen. iv. and viii.], were of express divine appointment, or were merely a mode

of worship which men devised of themselves, and which God thought fit to approve and accept. And there is nothing so distinctly said in Scripture on the subject as to authorise any one to decide confidently one way or the other. If it had been necessary that we should have any certainty as to this point, doubtless we should have had some plain declarations upon it.

Enoch's faith.

Of Enoch we find it recorded that he 'walked with God'—that is, led a life of eminent holiness, and was so far favoured as to be withdrawn from the earth without tasting of death. And he is referred to, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as an example of *faith*, inasmuch as 'without faith it is impossible to please God.' But as to the *subjects* of his faith, the Apostle himself seems to have had no distinct and particular knowledge, except that he must have believed in the existence and in the goodness of God; 'for he that cometh to God must believe that He is; and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

§ 12.

God revealed as the Maker of the world.

Of course, what is meant in this passage by the word 'God' is—what we also understand by it—the *Creator* of the world. We cannot doubt that He must have made Himself known to the earliest of mankind as the Maker of them-

selves, and of all things around them. And the account given in Genesis of the Creator, and of some other of the earliest events, is probably a tradition of this most ancient revelation, and was very likely committed to writing long before the time of Moses.

Notions of astronomy, &c., derived from the Bible.

Some persons have imagined that we are bound to take our notions of astronomy, and of all other Physical Sciences, from the Bible. And accordingly, when astronomers discovered, and proved, that the earth turns round on its axis, and that the sun does not move round the earth, some cried out against as this profane, because Scripture speaks of the sun's rising and setting. And this probably led some astronomers to reject the Bible, because they were taught that if they received *that* as a divine revelation, they must disbelieve truths which they had demonstrated.

So, also, some have thought themselves bound to believe, if they receive Scripture at all, that the earth, and all the plants and animals that ever existed on it, must have been created within six days, of exactly the same length as our present days. And this, even before the sun, by which we measure our days, is recorded to have been created. Hence, the discoveries made by geologists, which seem to prove that the earth and various races of animals must have existed a very long time before Man existed, have been represented as completely inconsistent with any belief in Scripture.

Objections drawn from science against the Bible.

It would be unsuitable to such a work as this to discuss the various objections (some of them more or less plausible, and others very weak) that have been brought — on grounds of science, or supposed science—against the Mosaic accounts of the Creation—of the state of the early world — and of the Flood, and to bring forward the several answers that have been given to those objections. But it is important to lay down the PRINCIPLE on which either the Bible, or any other writing or speech, ought to be studied and understood, namely, with a reference to *the object proposed* by the writer or speaker.

For example: suppose you bid any one proceed in a straight line from one place to another, and to take care to arrive before the sun goes down. He will rightly and fully understand you, in reference to the practical object which alone you had in view. Now, *you* perhaps know very well that there cannot really be *a straight line* on the surface of the earth, which is a *sphere* [globe]; and that the sun does not really *go down*, only our portion of the earth is turned away from it. But whether the other person knows all this or not, matters nothing at all with reference to your present object, which was not to teach him mathematics or astronomy, but to make him conform to your directions, which are equally intelligible to the learned and the unlearned.

Now, the object of the Scripture revelation is to teach men, not Astronomy or Geology, or any

other Physical Science, but *Religion*. Its design was to inform men, not *in what manner* the world was made; but WHO made it; and to lead them to worship Him, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, instead of worshipping his creatures, the heavens and earth themselves, as gods; which is what the ancient heathen (as will be pointed out in the next lesson) actually did.

Object of Scripture revelation.

Although, therefore, Scripture gives very scanty and imperfect information respecting the earth and the heavenly bodies, and speaks of them in the language, and according to the notions, of the people of a rude age, still it fully effects the object for which it was given, when it teaches that the heavens and the earth are not gods to be worshipped, but that '*God created the heavens and the earth*,' and that it is He who made the various tribes of animals, and also man.

But as for astronomy and geology, and other sciences, men were left—when once sufficiently civilized to be capable of improving themselves—to make discoveries in them by the exercise of their own faculties.

§ 13.

Origin of false religions.

But whatever may have been the religious instruction originally afforded to mankind, most of them appear not to have made the proper use of their advantages; but to have fallen in very early times into idolatry and superstitions of various kinds.

Whether false religion was introduced before the Flood we are not expressly told, but there is every reason to think it must have been. For we read that mankind had become excessively wicked, and that this brought on them that terrible judgment. And all experience shows that great moral depravity and gross religious corruption accompany each other. Moral corruption favours the introduction of corrupted and false religious notions; and a false religion, in turn, favours immorality.

Moreover, there is a passage in Genesis [ch. iv. 26] which, though it be but an obscure hint, seems to relate to the first introduction of false gods, in the time of Enos, grandson of Adam, and apparently about three or four centuries after the Creation. The passage is translated in the text of our version, 'then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord.' But the translation in the margin is, 'then began men to call themselves by the Name of the Lord.' And some learned men translate it, 'then began men to call the Lord by Name.'

The sense of the passage certainly cannot be that divine worship was then introduced for the first time; which we know from the preceding history [ch. iv. 3.] was not the case. But it probably means that then those who worshipped the true God began to apply to Him some distinct name, or title, such as *Adonai* or *Jehovah*, to distinguish Him from the pretended gods worshipped by others; and that they called themselves 'by his Name,'—that is, described themselves as his worshippers—to distinguish themselves

from those who served other gods. As long as one God only was acknowledged in the world, there was no need to apply to Him any distinguishing title. But when the worship of other Beings was introduced, it would be necessary for the true worshippers to mark the distinction.

It is probable, therefore, that this was the time when such false worship first became prevalent.

In later times, we know, false religions did prevail very extensively, as indeed they still do, among a large portion of mankind.

In the next lesson we shall consider what was the real character of the Pagan religions, and, also, in what way it is likely they were introduced.*

* It has been alleged of late years, that 'some writers have represented the earliest generations of mankind as in a *high state of civilization*:' and that 'this doctrine has been maintained from a desire to confirm Scripture-history.' No such writers, however, are cited or referred to; and there is reason to suspect that none such ever existed, and that the whole is a misstatement, whether from error of memory, or from whatever other cause. For thus much, at least, is certain; that no one could possibly have been led by a *desire of confirming Scripture-history*, to attribute *high civilization* to the first generations of men, since this would go to *contradict* Scripture-history. According to that, mankind were originally in so *very humble a degree* of civilization, that even the use of metals appears to have been introduced only in the seventh generation.

It has also been alleged that an instance *has* been found, of a perfectly savage nation raising itself unassisted into a civilized state. The case adduced is that of a North American tribe, called the Mandans, who were visited and described by Mr. Catlin, not many years ago, but who have since been extirpated by some neighbouring tribes. These people, it seems, dwelt in a strongly fortified town, while all the other Indian tribes live in open and defenceless villages. And they practised several useful arts to which their neighbours were strangers.

Admitting, then (what is perhaps not quite impossible), that these Mandans might, under favourable circumstances, have gone on to raise themselves to a higher degree of civilization, it only remains to be proved, first, that they were once in as rude a state as the wildest savages around them; and, secondly, that from this state they raised themselves by *their own* unassisted efforts.

But of these two points, on which the whole question turns, no proof, or even pretended proof, is adduced. The whole is simply *taken for granted*, without a shadow of evidence.

Mr. Catlin himself mentions several circumstances which led him to believe the Mandans to be a different race—or, at least, largely intermixed with a different race—from all the other Indian tribes. But, at any rate, no one has even attempted to prove the contrary; or has adduced a particle of evidence to show either that these people were once in a perfectly savage state, or that no former generation of them ever received instruction and assistance from persons more civilized.

By this kind of 'science,' as it has been called—that is, by 'begging the question'—it is easy to prove anything whatever. As, for example, to make out that Polypes and Cockles, in many successive generations, raised themselves into fishes and reptiles: thence into quadrupeds and apes; then into savage men; and lastly, into civilized men. There is, in short, nothing that may not be established by simply taking for granted anything that may serve the purpose.

One of the writers, however, who maintain the self-civilization of these Mandans (see *Edinburgh Review*, January 1842, p. 423), undertakes to account for it by the circumstance of their living in a fortified town, which afforded them leisure and opportunity for inventing and cultivating useful arts. There might be something in this, supposing them to have fixed themselves in some *naturally* impregnable stronghold, which they had chanced by some lucky accident to light on. But as it was they *themselves* who had fortified their town, to attribute to this their first emerging from the savage state, is a curious instance of mistaking effect for cause. It is as if any one should attribute the first origin of European civilization to our having access to good Libraries and Museums: or as if any one should maintain that the intellectual superiority of Man over the Brutes depends not at all on any difference of organisation, but is *caused* by the use of language and of letters. No doubt, conversation and reading tend much to the improvement of the mind; but if there were no rationality to begin with, how should these ever have existed?

It is said, however, that the Mandans were placed under a *necessity* of fortifying themselves, from being surrounded by other tribes frequently hostile to them. The writer must have been strangely ignorant of his subject, if he did not know that the same is the case with that vast number of other Indian tribes inhabiting all parts of that extensive region. All of these are generally at war with their neighbours. Yet necessity has not, to them, proved 'the mother of invention,' or even of imitation. For even those of them who have had before their eyes the example of the Mandans, yet continue, with the genuine improvidence of savages, to inhabit defenceless villages; in which, accordingly, they are from time to time surprised or overpowered, and slaughtered by a superior hostile force.

It may safely be said, therefore, that every attempt to controvert the doctrines we have been maintaining has proved a complete failure.

Books from which principally the above lesson was compiled :—

Indroductory Lectures on Political Economy. By R. Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Third edition, revised and enlarged. 8vo. London : John W. Parker, West Strand.

Tractatus tres de locis quibusdam Scripturæ difficilioribus. Frankfort.

New Zealanders (Library of Entertaining Knowledge.) London : Nattali, Bedford Street.

Lectures on Instinct. London : Orr and Co., Amen Corner.

LESSON II.

THE PAGAN RELIGIONS.

§ 1.

Pagans, Heathens, or Gentiles.

THE worshippers of false gods,—such as the greater part of mankind formerly were—are usually called *Heathens* or *Pagans*. The word *Heathen*,* as well as the word *Gentiles*, which had the same meaning, signified originally *Nations*. But since all, or nearly all, Nations except the Jews (who called themselves the Lord's *People*), were worshippers of false gods, hence the word 'Heathen' came to be used as it is now.

And 'Pagan' also, which originally signified a *Villager*, came to be used in the same sense; because, in the early times of Christianity, many of the inhabitants of retired country villages retained their old superstitions, after the inhabitants of the *towns* had been converted to the Gospel.

Some persons who know a good deal about Mythology,—that is, who know the names of the

* This is the most general opinion: but some believe that the word 'heathen' is not derived from the Greek 'Ethné,' nations, but from a word signifying 'savages,' 'wild men.'

heathen gods, and the stories that were told about them—yet mistake altogether the real character of the Pagan religions. They sometimes imagine that all men, in every age and country, have always designed to worship one Supreme God, the Maker of all things; and that the error of the Pagans consisted merely in the false accounts they gave of Him, and in their worshipping other inferior gods besides.

Real character of the Pagan Religions.

But this is altogether a mistake. Few, if any, of the ancient Pagans ever thought of worshipping a Supreme Creator at all. Those who believed, or suspected, that the world had been created never pretended that it was the work of any of the gods they worshipped. Many thought that the world was not created, but eternal. And others thought, that though it had a beginning, it was the production of what they called chance; that is, they fancied that the matter of which the world consists, moved about at random, and accidentally fell into the shape it now bears.

§ 2.

The ancient Heathen, Atheists.

These persons were what *we* should call *Atheists.* For, by the word GOD, we understand the Eternal Being, who made and who governs all things. And if any one should deny that there *is* any such Being, we should say that he was an Atheist that is, one who believes in *no God.* And

even though he might believe that there do exist Beings *superior to man*,—such as the Fairies and Genii which, in many parts of the world, are believed in,—still he would not be the less an Atheist.

Accordingly the Apostle Paul (2 Eph. 12) expressly calls the ancient Pagans Atheists;* though he well knew that they worshipped certain supposed superior beings which they called gods. But he says, in the Epistle to the Romans, that they 'worshipped the creature more than the Creator.' And at Lystra,† when the people were going to do sacrifice to him and Barnabas, mistaking them for two of their gods, he told them to 'turn from these vanities to serve the *Living God*, who *made heaven and earth*.'

This is what is declared in the first sentence of the Book of Genesis. And so far were the ancient Pagans from believing that 'in the beginning God made the heavens, and the earth,' that on the contrary, the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and many other natural objects, were among *the very gods they adored.*

Worship of created beings.

The heavens,—that is, the sky,—the atmosphere around us,—they worshipped under the title of Zeus, or Dis—of Jupiter, or Jove—and (among the Canaanites and Babylonians) of Baal, Bel, or Belus. They worshipped the earth also under the title of Demeter and Cybele; called by our Anglo-Saxon ancestors Hertha (whence our words 'earth,'

* This word does not appear in our version; but the apostle uses the very word Atheoi, from which our word 'atheist' is taken.

† Acts iv.

and 'hearth'), and by them most especially venerated. The Pagans also worshipped the sea, under the title of Neptune; the sun, under that of Phœbus, or Apollo; and the Moon under that of Diana. These last they called the son and daughter of Jove; meaning that the sun and moon were produced by the heavens.

The Egyptians also worshipped the same kind of gods, and among others, the great river Nile, on which the fertility of their country depends. The plagues which the Lord sent on Egypt (Ex. xii. 12) when he delivered the Israelites, seem to have been partly designed to prove his superiority and dominion over these pretended gods, by making them the very instruments of his judgments. Their *river* was turned into blood: the *earth* brought forth a plague of frogs: the *sky*—the heavens or atmosphere which they worshipped—sent forth destructive hail and lightning; and the *sun* was darkened. This was a useful lesson both to the Israelites, and to the Egyptians themselves, as many as would learn from it.

§ 3.

Worship of supposed beings presiding over certain human faculties.

The ancient Pagans seem to have supposed that certain living spirits resided in, and ruled over, the air, the sun, moon, earth and sea. And besides these, they also worshipped a number of other supposed Beings who presided over the several passions, and faculties, and actions of man Thus Minerva was the goddess of Wisdom; and

Mars the god of War: and they often used the word Minerva to signify *intelligence* and Mars to signify *valour*. So Hermes [or Mercury] was a supposed Being, presiding over *traffic*, and also over *eloquence*. And thence it was that the Lystrans 'called Paul Mercurius, because he was the chief *speaker*' (Acts, ch. xiv. 12).

Pagan gods not thought eternal.

None of the ancient Pagans considered any of their gods as *eternal*. They generally supposed them *immortal*—that is, exempt from *death*; but they generally had some tradition about the *birth* of each of them. Indeed, several of them were confessedly dead men, whom they imagined to have been raised to the ranks of the gods by their great deeds on earth. Thus Romulus, the founder of Rome, was worshipped by the Romans under the title of Quirinus. And Hercules, and many others, worshipped by the ancient Pagans, were deified men, supposed to have gained immortality by their eminent virtues, and especially by their feats of war.

The northern nations, however, thought that the gods they worshipped were doomed finally to perish, after a very long life. These gods, nevertheless, are supposed, most of them, to have answered to the Greek and Roman gods, though with different names. Of these names we have still a kind of record in the names of the days of the week, which were dedicated by our Pagan forefathers, each to one of their gods. The first day of the week was dedicated, as its name shows, to the sun, and the

second to the moon. Tuesday was sacred to Tuesco, the same as the Roman Mars; Wednesday, to Woden, who is supposed to be the same with Mercury; Thursday to Thor — that is, Jupiter; and Friday to Friga, who was the Venus of the Romans, the goddess of Beauty. And Saturday was dedicated to Saturn, who was reckoned the father of Jupiter.

§ 4.

Gods of the Heathen accounted by the Jews to be evil demons.

Many of the Jews, and of the early Christians, seem not to have disbelieved the *existence* of the heathen gods, but to have considered them as evil demons, whom it was impious to worship. They did, indeed, often deride the Heathen for worshipping images, 'the work of men's hands, wood and stone.' * But it is plain that any one who does this must believe that there is some living spirit residing in the image, or somehow connected with it. For no one *could* pay adoration to a mere stone, believing it, himself, to be nothing more than a stone. And it appears that many of the Jews and early Christians believed the Beings that were represented by the heathen idols to be demons. Thus we find the Jews calling Beelzebub the prince of the demons, and blasphemously attributing to him the miracles of our Lord. Now Beelzebub was the Philistine god of Ekron. (2 Kings, ch. 1.) And

* See Isaiah xliv.

certainly the character which the Pagans attributed to their gods was very much that of evil demons.

Evil character of the Heathen gods.

The very best of these gods were represented by them as capricious and profligate tyrants, whom they worshipped more from fear than love. One in particular, who was especially dreaded, was Pan, who was accounted the god of Shepherds. In particular, they attributed to him all sudden and unaccountable *terrors*, such as sometimes seize armies or other large bodies of men, and which have thence received the name of *Panic*. Their images represent him as partly in the human form, and partly in that of a goat, with horns and cloven hoofs. And hence it is that, by a kind of tradition, we often see, even at this day, representations of Satan in this form. For the early Christians seem to have thought that it was *he* whom the Pagans adored under the name of Pan.

This is certain; that several savage tribes at this day profess to believe in a *good* god and an evil one; and address all their *worship*, and offer their sacrifices to the *evil* one. They suppose that the good Being will, of his own accord, without being asked, do all the good in his power; and all their prayers and offerings are to the Evil One, — or to several evil Beings,—whose malice they hope to soften.

§ 5.

Heathen Idols.

The images and pictures of the gods of the ancient Egyptians, and of the Hindoos at this day, are usually strange monstrous figures, half man and half brute. And such was the Philistine image of Dagon, which was half man and half fish. The Greeks and Romans, on the contrary, represented the greater part of their deities as handsome men and women; but the image of Pan, and some others, were exceptions. And the emblem* of Diana at Ephesus, which they worshipped as having 'fallen down from Jupiter,' is said to have been a rude shapeless stone. It was most likely an aerolite—one of those stones which do really sometimes fall from the sky. So also is, most likely, a black mass of stone at Mecca, venerated by the Mahometans. For though Mahomet was opposed to idolatry, he found the veneration of the Arabians for this stone to be so great, that he did not venture to oppose it.

Pagan worship corrupting to the morals.

As for the kind of worship which the Pagans paid to their gods, it was very much what might have been expected, considering what kind of Beings these gods were, according to their own accounts of them. When Moses is cautioning the Israelites against being led away by the example

* In our version (Acts, xix) it is called 'the *image* which fell down from Jupiter;' but the word 'image' is supplied by the translators. The original says nothing about an *image*, but merely speaks of their worshipping 'that which fell down from Jupiter.'

of their idolatrous neighbours, he says, 'every abomination unto the Lord which He hateth, have these nations done *unto their gods*; for even their sons and their daughters have they burned in the fire unto their gods.' And the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands, at this day, offer human victims to their gods: as did also the people of Mexico. The grossest profligacy, and the most atrocious cruelties, were not only not forbidden by the Pagan religions, but were even a *part* of their religious worship; especially at the festivals of their god Bacchus. And even the best of their gods were supposed to be more gratified by costly offerings and splendid temples, than by a pure and virtuous life in their worshippers. This, indeed, was quite natural; since these gods were described as not only themselves committing the most abominable actions, but as *patrons* of such actions. Mercury, for instance, was reckoned the god, not only of traffic, but of cheating; and the Romans had a goddess of *thieves*, called Laverna, who was regularly worshipped as well as the rest. Mars and Bellona, the god and goddess of war, are described as delighting in human carnage.

Words derived from the Heathen gods denote something evil.

And indeed there are, in modern languages, words still in use, derived from the Pagan religions, and generally signifying something *evil*. Thus the word *Martial*, derived from the god *Mars*, signifies 'pertaining to war,'—that scourge and disgrace of mankind.

Panic as applied to groundless *terror*, has been already mentioned as derived from Pan. And *bacchanalian*, signifying drunken revelling, is so called from the Bacchanals, the worshippers who took part in the festivals of Bacchus. *Jovial*, derived in the same manner from Jove, has nearly the same meaning: and other such instances might be added.

§ 6.

Pagan notions respecting a future life.

As for the notions of the ancient Pagans respecting a future state, the Greeks and Romans had indeed poetical tales among them of a place of punishment after death, called Tartarus, appointed for those who had displeased the gods, and of a place of happiness, called Elysium, for those whom the gods approved. But if these tales were ever seriously believed by any one, at least it is plain that, in the days of the Apostle Paul, no one regarded them as anything more than fables. For he exhorts his converts at Thessalonica, not to sorrow for their deceased friends, 'even as the rest'—that is, all their Pagan countrymen—'who have no hope.'*

And several funeral orations, and letters of condolence, composed by Pagan writers, have come down to us, in which they endeavour to comfort the surviving friends of the departed, by speaking of the good name they have left behind, and other

* This is the exact translation of the original; not 'others,' but 'the rest.' See also Eph. ii. 12.

matters of that kind; but never allude at all to a future life.*

Future state according to the Hindoos.

On the other hand, the Hindoos of the present day do seem to believe in a future state of existence. They hold the doctrine of transmigration—i. e., that the souls of all men (except those of extraordinary holiness) are doomed to migrate into the bodies of various brutes, and at length, if found worthy, are admitted into heaven. And the kind of holiness which they expect will entitle men to future happiness, consists, not in virtuous conduct, but in rich offerings, and the performance of various ceremonies, many of them excessively cruel—such as hanging themselves up by iron hooks plunged into their flesh, and other self-inflicted tortures. And a woman who burns herself alive along with her husband's corpse, and any one who drowns himself in the sacred river Ganges, or gives himself to be devoured by certain sacred alligators, or to be crushed under the wheels of the sacred car of the idol Juggernauth, is supposed to gain the special favour of their gods.

How strange and how shocking it is, that it should often be found so easy to persuade men to do the most absurd and hateful deeds, and to suffer things so dreadful, for the sake of divine favour; while it is so difficult to bring Christians to bear the 'easy yoke and light burden' of the Redeemer!

* See Scripture Revelations of a Future State, lect. i. p. 18—25.

§ 7.

Idolatry of the Israelites, resembling what now exists.

We are apt to read with great astonishment, of the Israelites who so often fell into the idolatry of their Pagan neighbours, after having had the true God revealed to them. Although He had so earnestly warned them not to worship any other gods, we find them continually joining the worship of Baal and other heathen gods with that of Jehovah. This appears to some persons so strange as to be hardly credible; and yet the very same thing is going on, almost before our eyes, in Christian countries at this very day. For in all parts of Europe the most uneducated portion of the people in remote districts are found to believe in, and fear various superhuman beings, which are in reality no other than the gods of their Pagan forefathers. And though they do not give them the title of *gods*, they often pay them great reverence, and make some kind of offerings to them.

Veneration paid in Christian countries to gods of ancient Pagans.

In some parts of Great Britain and of Ireland, *fairies* are believed in and venerated. In Scotland, besides these, we hear of *bogles*, *brownies*, and *kelpies*, as names of certain superhuman Beings dreaded by the superstitious. In Denmark and Iceland we hear of *trolls*; in Germany, of *nixes*, and many other such Beings, who are supposed to have power in human affairs. In Norway, the country people are said to make an

offering of a cake once a year to a demon which they dread; and also, of the first cheese that is made each spring. In some parts of our own country, a cottier's wife will not venture to bake bread or churn butter, without offering a portion to the fairies. And several other such acts of superstitious devotion are practised in various parts of Europe.

Now, there is every reason to believe that all these Beings who are thus reverenced, are,—as we have already said,—the very *heathen gods* which were formerly worshipped in each country. And the persons who show them this reverence, and who seek their help, and dread to displease them, and aim at obtaining their good-will, are doing exactly the same as the Israelites of old when they worshipped Baal, and Astaroth, and other gods of the heathen.

How men are misled by words into the worship of heathen gods.

But what misleads people in their notions on this subject, is, that the *words* we use are not the same as the ancient Pagans used. What were formerly called by some name answering to 'gods,' are now called 'fairies,' or 'kelpies,' or genii, &c., and the *reverence* shown them is not called *worship*; and the offerings made to them are no longer called *sacrifices*. And thus it is that professed Christians deceive themselves by means of words, and fancy that they are not paying *worship* to any *gods* besides the Lord, though they are doing the same thing under other names.

§ 8.

Supposed compacts of men with evil spirits.

In former times—indeed, less than two centuries ago — many persons were tried, and condemned, and executed, as witches, in this country, and in other parts of Europe. They were supposed to have formed compacts with evil spirits, who gave them power to do hurt to their neighbours. And doubtless many innocent persons suffered as witches through the superstitious credulity of their neighbours. Some persons, there is reason to think, really did employ remedies not generally known, for the cure of diseases, without pretending or designing to call in the aid of evil spirits, or to perform any kind of miracle. And yet the brutish and ignorant superstition of the people caused these to be persecuted as witches, merely because they performed something different from what had been usually seen. There is an account of a poor man in France, in the latter part of the last century, who appears to have cured a number of persons of various diseases, and who was thereupon denounced as dealing with evil spirits, and not only compelled to discontinue his practice, but harassed with persecution.

Sin of some reputed witches.

But though many innocent persons, probably, suffered in this way, it is likely that some of those who were thus punished were impostors, who wickedly took advantage of the superstition of the ignorant,

for the sake of gain, or to gratify revenge. And it is likely that others of them were themselves partakers of the same superstition, and intended to call in the aid of evil spirits, and believed themselves able to do so.

These persons were evidently just as sinful as if they had really possessed this power. And the same may be said of those persons spoken of in the Old Testament, who professed to be witches, or to have 'a familiar spirit;' that is, to have at command one of the evil demons whom the heathen worshipped. Against such persons the penalty of death is denounced by the Law of Moses. For whether they did really possess any supernatural powers or not, their *intention* was, evidently, to call in, or to pretend to call in, the aid of demons. And it is plain that the real character of any action consists in the *intention*.

The sin of false worship consists in the intention.

Any one who prays to an idol, though it be really nothing but a block of wood, or who calls on evil spirits for aid, though he receive no such aid, is idolatrous, because his intention is idolatrous. And, on the other hand, any one whose intention is to obey and serve God, and to rely fully on Him, and Him alone, may set all evil spirits at defiance, and need not trouble himself with any fear of omens, and charms, and curses, and magical arts, or anything else that is accounted *unlucky* by superstitious people.

If we employ for a good purpose, according to the

best of our judgment and ability, whatever powers of nature or of art God's providence has placed within our reach, and exert ourselves to do our duty, that providence, if we do but fully trust to it, will protect us from all evils, except such afflictions as God Himself thinks fit to send us for our discipline and improvement. For 'all things work together for good to them that love Him.'

§ 9.

Origin of false worship.

With respect to the way in which false religions were first introduced, there can be no doubt that they must have crept in gradually. For men would not all at once forsake the worship of the Great Creator, and forget his very existence, and serve other gods *instead* of Him. But it is likely, that when they had come to imagine certain inferior spirits to reside in the sun and moon, the sea, rivers, groves, &c., they would next be led to call upon these Beings, in the hope that *perhaps* such prayers might be heard. And when once the practice has arisen of men's *adding on* to the worship of the Most High, some invocations of other, inferior, Beings, this latter kind of worship always tends to prevail over and drive out the other. Men seem to think that an inferior Being, who approaches nearer to their own nature, is more likely to feel sympathy with them, and perhaps is also more likely to be gratified by their adoration and their offerings, than the Supreme God. And even at this day there are some Pagan

nations who are said to acknowledge the existence of a Great Being, who is the Supreme Ruler of all things, but whom they think it would be presumptuous for them to address; so that all their worship is reserved for some supposed gods of a lower order.

This at least is certain, that the Apostle Paul expressly informs us [Rom. i.] that false worship did not first originate among men from their knowing nothing, and having no means of knowing anything, of the true God, and being left entirely to their own conjectures. For he distinctly declares that some at least, 'when they knew God, glorified Him not as God,' and 'did not *like* to retain God in their knowledge, but changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator.'

Vulgar superstitions dishonestly encouraged.

It is very probable (and this seems to have been the apostle's notion) that many of the more intelligent portion of mankind, in the days when false worship first arose, did not themselves partake of the superstitions of the weaker and more ignorant, but encouraged those superstitions, for the sake of gratifying the vulgar, or keeping them in subjection to themselves, by means of a religion suited, as they thought, to unenlightened and feeble minds. Certain it is, that some dishonesty of this kind has often been practised, in various ages and countries, and under various religious systems. Men of education and intelligence have often thought themselves justified in dis-

guising, or concealing, or altering some portion of what they believed to be religious truth, and teaching or encouraging the vulgar to believe somewhat different from what they themselves believed. And this dishonest system has always led, in the end, to the grossest corruptions, both of doctrine and of morals.

§ 10.

Use of images one cause of false worship.

One great cause, probably, of the multiplication of gods among the Pagans, was the use of images or pictures. When men had introduced the practice of making some kind of emblem intended to represent either the Supreme God, or any other Being they worshipped, they would easily be led to pay more and more veneration to the emblem itself, so as to become what is properly called 'idolaters;' that is, worshippers of an image or picture. And it would often happen that one set of men would venerate one image, and others another somewhat different, though originally designed to represent the same Being. And there would also be some difference in the kind of worship paid to each of these images, and in the tales related concerning it: so that by degrees some of them would come to be considered as so many distinct gods.

Doubts respecting the number of the objects worshipped.

Thus, it seems to have been a matter of doubt whether there were not two Jupiters; whether there were one, or two, or three Mercuries; whether the

moon, and Diana, and Hecate, were three goddesses or one; and the like in many other instances. And probably this was one reason why the Israelites were so strictly charged, in the Law of Moses, to worship all of them at *one* place, 'which the Lord should chuse to set his name there:' lest, from having several different temples, that barbarian and gross-minded people should come to imagine there were several gods.

§ 11.

Differences and dissensions among Pagan worshippers.

It often happened that different tribes of men worshipped either different gods, or the same under some different emblem, and with different ceremonies. And there is reason to believe that the confusion which is recorded as having occurred at Babel—afterwards called Babylon—and which caused the dispersion of mankind into various countries, was in reality a dispute among them as to their worship of some god or gods. This, at least, is certain; that the scheme mentioned in Gen. xi. was something displeasing to God, and therefore could not have been *merely* the building of a tower. And it is plain also from the Bible history, that some ages after the Flood mankind had very generally fallen into gross idolatry; though we are not told expressly when, and how, it was introduced.

Tower of Babel.

As for the Tower of Babel, it is said indeed in our Version, that a number of persons joined together to build 'a tower whose top should reach to

heaven,' (our translators meant an exceeding *high* tower), in order that they might not be 'scattered over the face of the whole earth;' and that God sent on them a confusion of language, which caused them to 'cease building the tower, and scattered them.'

But you are to observe that the word 'reach' is supplied by our translators,* there being nothing answering to it in the Original, which merely says, 'whose top, to the heavens.'

Temple of Jupiter at Babylon.

And the meaning doubtless is, that the top of the tower should be *dedicated* to the heavens—that is, that a temple should be built on it to Bel, Belus, Zeus, or Jupiter; under which title the ancient Pagans worshipped the heavens. For we find the Greek historian, Herodotus, who, many ages after, visited Babylon, expressly declaring that there was there, in his time, a very high tower, on the top of which was a temple to Belus; who, he says, was the same with the Zeus of the Greeks.

The ancient Pagans, you should observe, were accustomed to erect altars to the heavens, or to the sun, on 'high places;' [Numb. xxxiii. v. 52] on the loftiest mountains. And as the land of Shinar is a very fertile plain of vast extent, and quite level, it seems to have been designed to make a sort of artificial mountain on it—that is, a very high tower—and to build a temple on the top of this, to their god Belus, and so to establish a great empire consisting of people worshipping at this temple.

* As you may see by its being printed in Italics.

Confusion of Lip—that is, of worship.

The 'confusion' which God sent among them, and which caused the tower to be less lofty than originally designed, and dispersed many of the people into other lands, was most likely not a confusion of *language*, but a dissension about *religious worship*. The word in the original literally signifies *lip*. And it is more likely that it was used to signify *worship* than *language*. A dissension as to *that*, which was the very object of the building, would much more effectually defeat the scheme than a confusion of languages. For, labourers engaged in any work, and speaking different languages, would, in a few days, learn, by the help of signs, to understand one another sufficiently to enable them to go on with their work. But if they disagreed as to the very object proposed, this would effectually break up the community.

Diversity of existing languages not necessarily miraculous.

As for the different languages now spoken in the world, there is no need of explaining that by any miraculous interference. For, tribes who have not the use of letters, and have but little intercourse with each other, vary so much from each other in their language, after even a few generations, as not to be able at all to understand each other.

For instance, all the savage tribes inhabiting Brazil have languages that have been plainly traced to a common stock. Yet they differ so much as to be quite unintelligible to each other. And so it is with

the savage tribes of New Hollanders. And the English language, again, is plainly formed from a mixture of the ancient German and of the French. Yet a person who knows both German and French cannot understand English.

Books chiefly employed in the compilation of the above Lesson :—

Fairy Mythology, by Thomas Keightley, 2 vols. 12mo. London : Whittaker and Co., Ave-maria Lane.

Tales and Popular Fictions; their resemblance and transmission from Country to Country. London : Whittaker and Co., Ave-maria Lane.

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A View of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State, laid before his Parishioners. By a Country Pastor. Sixth edition. London : John W. Parker, West Strand.

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LESSON III.

THE MOSAIC DISPENSATION.

§ 1.

True worshippers in the earliest ages.

It is plain from Scripture history, that both before the Flood and afterwards, God did, from time to time, hold communication, in some way or other, with mankind—that is, with such as continued faithful worshippers of Him.

To Noah in particular we find Him giving commandments, both before the Flood and immediately after it; and accepting sacrifice from him.

Call of Abraham.

In a later age, we find divine commands issued to Abraham, and promises made to him of peculiar blessings to a nation which should descend from him through Isaac; and also of an extension of blessings to all mankind, through them;—that 'in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed.' *

And although idolatry and gross wickedness seem, in Abraham's time and afterwards, to have overspread most parts of the world, still there were some besides him and his family, who retained the worship of the true God.

* Gen. xxii.

For in the history of Abraham we find mention of Melchizedek, a king, who held also the office of 'a priest of the Most High God.' * *Melchizedek.*

Jethro, again, the father-in-law of Moses, appears to have been a worshipper of the true God. And the prophet Balaam, though a wicked man, is spoken of as a real prophet of the Lord. *Jethro.*

It is likely, also, that some of the Egyptians were worshippers of the Lord, though so many of that nation had fallen into idolatry. For we read of Joseph's marrying the daughter of an Egyptian priest:† and, though possible, it does not seem likely, that so eminently pious a man would have married the daughter of an idolatrous priest. This at least is certain, that the Greek historian Plutarch speaks of a certain portion of the land of Egypt which was exempted from the tax levied on the rest for the support of idolatrous worship. And this, he says, was on account of their being worshippers only of ONE whom they called Cneph, 'the unbegotten God.' ‡ And the plagues inflicted on Egypt by the LORD GOD of Israel,§ the complete dominion He displayed over the Beings the idolators worshipped, must, no doubt, have brought some of the Egyptians to acknow- *True worshippers among the Egyptians.*

* Gen. xiv. † Gen. xli. ‡ See Lesson II. § 2.
§ 'On all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment.'—Exodus, xii. 12.

ledge and worship Him.* But we are told very few particulars of the faith or the worship† of the servants of the true God, till we come to the time when Moses, by divine command, delivered to the 'chosen' ['elect'] 'People' Israel that system of religion which is called 'The LAW.'

§ 2.

Levitical Law.

Of this—the Mosaic [Levitical] Law—we find a full account in the last four Books of Moses. And these should be carefully studied by any one who would gain as accurate an understanding as possible of the system under which that most remarkable nation, the Israelites, were placed.

For our present purpose, it will be sufficient to mark out the most important points which *distinguished* the Mosaic Dispensation—the Religion of the Israelites—from what came before it, and from what followed it—that is, on the one hand, from the religion of those worshippers of the true God who lived *before* the time of Moses, and, on the other hand, from the Gospel Dispensation—the religious system under which *we* are placed.

* Exod. ix.

† It is the opinion of many learned men that it was the practice of the servants of the true God in the earliest times to keep holy the last day of the week, [Saturday,] in memory of the close of the work of creation. And this seems probable; though no such practice is expressly recorded. But their mode of observing the day could hardly have been altogether the same with what was enjoined to the Israelites. To these the Sabbath seems to have been, in the *particulars* of the observance, a *new* and a *peculiar* institution. And, accordingly, we find in the prophecy of Ezekiel, the Lord saying, 'I *gave them* (the Israelites) my Sabbaths to be a *sign* between me and them.'

The Law designed for one Nation.

The Mosaic Law was designed for one People only, the ISRAELITES; or, as they are now commonly called, the JEWS; the tribe of Judah being that to which the far greater part of the Israelites now (as well as for many ages past) belong.

The LAW was designed to prepare the way for Christianity, a religion intended for all Mankind;* according to the promise made to Abraham, that some person or persons descended from him should prove a blessing to all nations. Yet the Law itself was given to *one* People alone. And, accordingly, when the Apostles of Jesus Christ, who were themselves Jews, converted vast multitudes of Gentiles to Christianity, teaching them, among other things, to acknowledge the divine origin of the Mosaic Law, they yet taught them that the ordinances of that Law did not extend to Gentiles.†

It is to be remembered, however, that before the Gospel-revelation, a Gentile was allowed, if he wished it, to become a *Proselyte*; that is, to embrace the Mosaic Law and join himself to God's People. And thenceforth, he was not regarded as 'unclean'‡ and an 'alien'§ but only as ranking next below the Israelites by birth.

And, moreover, Gentiles who had renounced idolatry, but did not conform to the whole Law,

* See Lesson IV. on Christian Evidences.

† Gal. v. 'Let no man judge you (says the Apostle Paul, when writing to Gentiles) in meat or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come; but the body of Christ.'—Ep. to Col. ii. 16.

‡ Acts, x. § Eph. ii. 12.

Devout Gentiles.

but only to a certain small number of regulations, were admitted to worship in the outer-court of the Temple (the 'Court of the Gentiles'),* and to attend divine service in the synagogues. These Gentiles are often alluded to in the Book of Acts, under the title of 'the Devout,' or they 'who feared God;' (that is, the Lord Jehovah,) such as was Cornelius the Centurion,† And after the time of the Captivity, there were, in various countries, many Jews residing dispersed among the Gentiles: ‡ and these Gentiles had thus an opportunity of learning (as a considerable number of them did learn) to know and to serve the true God.

But those Gentiles who had no Jews resident among them, had no such opportunity.

Reasons of the divine counsels not revealed.

Why it was that the MOST HIGH thought fit to make a revelation to this one People, and not at once to all the world, we cannot explain, and must not presume to decide. Indeed, we cannot explain why the Gospel was not preached to the very first generation of mankind; and why Jesus Christ came into the world just when He did. Nor can we explain why many nations in various parts of the world have been left, even to this day, in the darkness of idolatrous superstition; or, indeed, why any such thing as EVIL should exist at all.

* 1 Kings, viii. 41. † Acts x. and xiii. 26.

‡ These are thence called the 'Jews of the Dispersion,' (see the beginning of the epistle of James), or simply 'the Dispersion.'

All this, we must conclude, would have been explained to us in Scripture, if it had been necessary for us to understand it. As it is, any attempt to explain these things is fruitless and presumptuous. It is *our* business to inquire, not what *we* should have done, had the regulation of all things been left to us, but what God has actually done, and what He requires us to do.

§ 3.

The Mosaic religion local.

We have the most satisfactory reasons for believing that the Law of Moses was given by divine command; and also that it was given to the one nation of Israel, and not designed for the rest of mankind.

One of the many marks one may perceive, of this design is, that it was a *local* religion. The Israelites were directed to offer sacrifices, and to worship three times a year, at the one 'place which the Lord should chuse, to set his name there;' (that is, to place there the manifestation of his presence and power); and they were strictly forbidden to sacrifice anywhere else.* And, accordingly, when the Temple at Jerusalem had been finally fixed on as the chosen place, the destruction of that Temple made it thenceforth impossible for an Israelite to keep up the chief ordinances of his religion.

Hence, the final destruction of that Temple abolished, manifestly and totally, the Mosaic system

* Deut. xii. 13.

of religion. And thus (as you have read in the 15th Lesson on Evidences) a strong confirmation was afforded to the Jews of the truth of the Gospel.

But, moreover, this local character of the religion showed, from the very first, that it could not be designed for all mankind.

Moral precepts addressed to the Israelites.

And the same thing is indicated by the way in which all the laws are expressed. For it is remarkable that even those duties, which from their very nature must be duties for all men,—such as to worship the one true God only, and to honour one's parents—even these are enjoined to the Israelites in commandments which expressly refer to that one peculiar People. 'I am the Lord thy God, who *brought thee out of the Land of Egypt*; thou shalt have none other gods but Me:' and 'Honour thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long, in *the Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*'—that is, the Land of Canaan.

Of course Christians are bound to practise these and all other moral duties. But that is because these *are*, in themselves, *moral* duties; not because they are enjoined in the Law of Moses; which was designed for the one people of Israel.

Ceremonial Laws.

Other commandments there were relating to matters originally indifferent—neither good nor bad in themselves—but respecting which God laid down certain rules; and required the Israelites to comply with those rules in submission to his will.

Some of these commandments related to religious ceremonies or observances, such as the keeping of the Feast of the Passover—coming up to the Temple at Jerusalem three times a year—abstaining from certain meats, and wearing certain peculiar garments; with other things of that kind. These are commonly called *ceremonial* laws.

§ 4.

Civil laws.

And again there were other commandments which are called *civil* laws; being such as relate to matters which the civil-governors of any Country have a right to regulate, from time to time, as they think best; and to enforce by penalties, such as imprisonment, banishment, or death.

For the Lord was not only the *God*, but also the *King* (or civil-governor) of this peculiar People; and enacted all such laws for their good government, as the rulers of any other nation are authorized to enact, and enforce, and to annul or alter whenever they see fit.

Of this kind was the law that no man should part with his landed property, finally, but that, if sold, it should return to him or his heirs at the Jubilee, which took place every fifty years; and the law which directed that a man should marry his brother's widow if his brother died childless;* with many other such laws.

* Luke, xx. 29.

Positive precepts and moral precepts.

Now the ceremonial and the civil laws being such as relate to matters in themselves indifferent, are what are commonly called '*positive* precepts;' those relating to points of natural duty being called '*moral* precepts.' And it is very important to keep in mind the distinction between these two classes of laws. Anything enjoined by a *positive* precept, is *right because it is commanded*: anything enjoined by a *moral* precept, is *commanded because it was right.*

Thus, it was, to the Israelites, a duty to keep the Passover, as it is to Christians to celebrate the Lord's Supper; *because* divine commands to do so were given, and it is a moral duty to obey divine commands. But there was no such duty *before* those express commands were given.

On the other hand, to honour one's parents, is, from the nature of the case, a duty of all men; and the Israelites were commanded to do so, because it is right in itself.

Again, to abstain from all worship of false gods, or of images, and to reverence the true God, is a *natural duty*, and was enjoined to the Israelites because it is so. But no one would say that it is a natural duty to keep holy one day in seven, rather than one in six, or in eight; or to keep holy the last day of the week [the Saturday] rather than the first or any other; or to abstain from kindling a fire on that day.* But all this became a duty to the Israelites

* Exod. xxxv. 3.

when they had received a divine command to observe in that particular manner that particular day.

So also, to eat swine's-flesh was (to the Israelites) wrong, because it was forbidden. To steal, was forbidden, because it is wrong. And so with other commandments.

§ 5.

Minute directions of the Mosaic Law.

[ii.] Again, the Mosaic Law was distinguished from every other revelation ever bestowed on Man, by the great number and minuteness of its regulations, and the multitude of its ceremonial observances. It gives exact directions to the Israelites as to their diet, their dress, and their mode of life in many particulars.

The Law kept the Israelites distinct.

(1.) One purpose answered by these numerous ordinances, was to keep them quite distinct from other nations; that they might be the better kept from falling into the idolatrous worship of their neighbours, and might be marked out, both to them, and to themselves, as the Lord's peculiar People.

The legal observances kept up the memory of the religion.

(2.) And, moreover, it was needful for a half-barbarian and gross-minded people, such as the ancient Israelites, to keep up in their minds the thought of their religion, by a great number of outward ceremonies and observances. These served to remind an Israelite continually of the God whose servant he was, by his being required

from day to day to observe certain rules, and to perform certain acts, as a sign of his obedience to the Lord, and as a part of his religious duty.

The ceremonial law typical.

(3.) And a great part of the ceremonies of this law had also a *typical* meaning — that is, they were *types* [*emblems*, or figurative *representations*] of something belonging to the Gospel-revelation, which was to succeed them; and thus prepared the way for it.

In particular, the Passover, and all the other sacrifices of animals, were types representing the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for man's redemption. And, accordingly, we find the Apostle Paul expressly calling Him 'our Passover, who is sacrificed for us.' For as the blood of the first paschal-lamb sprinkled on the door-posts of the Israelites in Egypt* was to preserve their first-born from the destroying angel which slew the Egyptians, so, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ brings eternal deliverance and salvation to those who will be truly his disciples. And He is thence called in Scripture 'the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.'

And throughout the New Testament there are numerous references to the sacrifices and other ceremonial ordinances of the Law, as types representing the redemption by Christ, and foreshowing the Gospel Dispensation.

* Exod. xii. 7.

But all this was not understood, nor designed to be understood, by the Israelites to whom Moses delivered the Law. They were only required to observe strictly and carefully the directions given, without understanding the full meaning of all that was ordained. The Law of Moses, therefore, was like some important document written in *cypher*, or in an unknown language; which a man is directed to preserve very carefully till such time as he shall be furnished with a *key* to the cypher, or a translation. Just so, the Gospel, when it was revealed, furnished an interpretation of many things in the Mosaic Law, which had been before unintelligible as to their inward meaning.

Hidden meaning of the ceremonial law.

And this is what the Apostles mean when they speak of '*making known* the *mystery* of the Gospel.' For 'mystery' signifies, in *their* use of the word, something that *has* been concealed, and is afterwards *revealed* and explained.*

§ 6.

[iii.] Another distinguishing character of the Mosaic Law was, that it was enforced by a system of *temporal rewards and punishments*, administered according to an *extraordinary* [miraculous] *providence*.

Sanction of the Law temporary rewards and punishments.

The Israelites were promised, as the reward of obedience, long life, and health, and plentiful harvests, and victory over their enemies. And the

* Eph. vi. 19.

punishments threatened for disobedience, were pestilence, famine, defeat, and all kinds of temporal calamity.*

And the history of this most remarkable People is full of examples of the fulfilment of these promises and threats. In the Books of Moses himself, and in the historical books that follow, we find abundant instances of both kinds recorded.

The Israelites under a theocracy.

The LORD [Jehovah] was, as has been remarked above, not only the God but also the *king* [or civil-governor] of this peculiar People. And hence the word 'THEOCRACY' (which is a word denoting this kind of government,) is often applied to the system under which the Israelites lived. Hence, too, it was, that among them the worship of other gods was made a *capital crime*; because, under such a system it amounted, in fact, to *high-treason*.† For it is to be remembered that the Pagans regarded *their* gods as their temporal rulers; looking to them for victory and success of all kinds, consulting them, and acting on their supposed directions. The ideas of *tutelar god*, and *king*, were so blended in the minds both of the Pagans and the Israelites, that an Israelite could not worship Baal or Moloch, without so far withdrawing his allegiance from Jehovah his king. And even when they were ruled by judges, or by kings, they were under this theocracy; these rulers being considered as merely agents or deputies of the LORD thei

* Deut. xxviii. † Deut. xvii. 2.

King, and appointed or removed by Him. He issued direct commands, from time to time, to the nation, or their governors, as to various temporal concerns, such as are regulated by the supreme rulers of each state.*

And as all rulers enforce their commands by temporal penalties on the disobedient, such as forfeiture of goods, bodily chastisement, or death, so, the LORD enforced on the Israelites obedience to his commands by temporal rewards and punishments distributed according to an extraordinary providence.

Ordinary and extraordinary providence.

You must carefully keep in mind the distinction between an extraordinary [miraculous] providence, such as that under which the Israelites were placed, and the ordinary divine Providence by which the world generally is governed and which is sometimes called 'the course of Nature.'

God has appointed, that, as a general rule, though not an invariable one, good conduct shall lead, on the whole, to temporal success and welfare, and ill-conduct to misfortunes of various kinds. Thus, the *general* tendency of industry and frugality, is to lead to prosperity; and of idleness, improvidence, and extravagance, to poverty and distress. Temperance conduces, on the whole, to health; and intemperance usually brings on disease and death. The quarrelsome, the hardhearted, and the unjust, are likely to be hated or despised: while gentleness and

* 1 Sam. xv.

kindness tend in general to procure a man the goodwill of his neighbours; and (according to the proverb) in the long run 'honesty is the best policy.'

Ordinary course of events traceable.

Accordingly, in the ordinary course of events, we are generally able to trace men's good or ill success in life, to their good or ill conduct. For instance, when a man who has lived a life of sensuality and extravagance is ruined in health and in fortune, we can perceive the connexion between his misery and the vice and folly that have *naturally* caused it. Or again, if an honest, industrious, and prudent man becomes rich, we say that this is according to the *natural* course of things. And so, in other such cases. We do not mean, when we speak thus, that the 'natural course of things' is *not* regulated by divine Providence; but merely that such is the *ordinary*, established, and regular course of God's government of the universe.

§ 7.

Extraordinary providence.

On the other hand, when any occurrence is spoken of as 'supernatural,' [or 'miraculous'] although the word 'providential' is sometimes applied in the same sense, any one who believes that God is the supreme disposer of *all* events, cannot mean that such an occurrence is *more providential* than others; but merely, that it belongs to God's *extraordinary* providence.

And in any such case we can trace no connexion between the sin and the punishment, or between the good conduct and the reward, except so far as we learn it from *express revelation*.— For instance, when Korah and his company were swallowed up by an earthquake, as a punishment for having 'provoked the Lord,'* we know that this was a judgment on them for that sin, solely because Moses, by divine command, expressly declared the sin, and *foretold* the punishment. And it would be a most impious presumption for any uninspired man to pronounce concerning any persons who may have been destroyed by an earthquake, or by any other calamity, that this was a judgment on them for such and such a sin.

Extraordinary providences known by revelation only.

And again, when the Israelites were defeated before Ai, as a judgment for the transgression of one of them,† and when the land of the ten Tribes was burnt up with drought, in the days of Ahab, as a punishment for their idolatry,‡ we can trace no *natural* connexion between the sin and the consequences of it: and we know this connexion, only because we are expressly told it in Holy Scripture.

Some persons, however, do occasionally presume, without any commission from heaven, to pronounce judgment on their neighbours, and to declare that such and such a calamity is a mark of divine displeasure, and a

Impiety of usurping the prophetic offices.

* Num. xvi. † Josh. vii. ‡ 1 Kings, xvii.

punishment for such and such a sin. But such persons, though they are sometimes regarded, by the unthinking, as very pious, are, in reality, profanely daring to usurp the office of prophets of the LORD. And such conduct is expressly forbidden by Jesus Christ Himself: 'Suppose ye that the men on whom the tower fell in Siloam were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise [no less] perish.'* No one, He says, who persists in rebellion against God, will finally escape destruction; but He does not allow men to usurp the office of prophets, and to decide against any of their neighbours who may be visited with some calamity, that this is a mark of the divine displeasure, and a punishment for such and such a sin.

§ 8.

The change from the system of temporal rewards and punishments, a stumbling-block to the Jews.

This, however, was a notion which the Jews very much clung to—and very naturally: inasmuch as that particular nation *had* been originally placed under such a system of temporal rewards and punishments. They found it hard to believe, therefore, in the change of that system when the Gospel was preached. And, accordingly, the sufferings and death undergone by Jesus and many of his disciples, formed the chief

* Luke xiii. See Archbishop of Dublin's Charge, 1848.

stumbling-block to the Jews,* most of whom would not believe that He could be the true Christ, or a favoured servant of God; because they regarded his *sufferings* as a proof of the divine *dis*-favour.

And their rejection of Him, on this very ground, was accordingly foretold by the Prophet Isaiah:† * * * 'a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from Him:' * * * 'we did esteem Him stricken, *smitten of God* and afflicted,' &c.

Some Christians cling to the Mosaic system.

It seems strange to us that so many of the Jews should refuse to be convinced by such prophecies as this. But it is much more strange that there should be some Christians, who, though professed followers of a Master who was crucified, still persist in regarding temporal calamities as a proof of the divine displeasure against those who are so visited; and that there should be Christians who presume, against their great Master's express prohibition, to declare what the sins are that have called down on their neighbours such calamities.

Careless use of the words 'providential' and 'miraculous.'

Some persons, however, there are who carelessly use the words 'providential' and 'miraculous,' merely to denote anything *unusual* and strange. They talk of a 'miraculous' escape from some danger; meaning merely a *wonderful* escape: and of a man's being

* 1 Cor. i. 23. † Isaiah, liii.

delivered 'providentially,' when they mean only that the deliverance was striking and *remarkable*. But it is best to abstain from this loose kind of language, lest we should be understood to mean either that other events are *not* providential, and that God's government does not extend to the ordinary course of things, or else, that we—uninspired men—are permitted to decide (in cases where there is no evident miracle) what are the designs of the MOST HIGH, and what are the occurrences that do, and that do not, belong to his extraordinary [miraculous] dispensations.*

§ 9.

Sanction of the Law, the goods and evils of this life, not of a future state.

The nation of Israël was, as we have said, placed under an extraordinary providence, which allotted to them victory or defeat,—plenty or famine,—and other temporal blessings and punishments, according to their conduct. And these were the rewards and punishments that formed the *sanction* of the Mosaic Law.

* The reason some give for *distinguishing* some particular events as 'providential,' is, in truth, a reason on the opposite side. An unexpected recovery from a disease which seemed hopeless, or a wonderful escape from a shipwreck, &c., is, they say, more *striking* to their minds, and impresses them more with a sense of the goodness of Providence, than ordinary occurrences.

Now, for this very reason, they should labour the more carefully to bring themselves habitually to reflect on the *daily* benefits they receive from 'Him in whom we live and move and have our being.' The more prone we are to pass by with careless indifference our being preserved from *falling into* a dangerous sickness, or from *being* shipwrecked at all, the more we should study to bring our minds to dwell on such preservation; which is, in truth, *no less* '*providential*' than a man's being delivered *out* of a sickness, or a shipwreck.

As for a future state of retribution for good and bad men in another world, Moses said nothing to the Israelites about that. Whatever may at any time have been revealed to himself, and to some other highly-favoured individuals, on that subject, it does not appear that he was commissioned to deliver to the people any revelation at all concerning a future state. This was reserved for a GREATER than Moses, and for a more glorious dispensation than his Law. For, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'the Law *made nothing perfect*; but the *bringing in of a better hope*, did'*—namely, the promises given through 'Jesus Christ, who brought life and immortality to light, *through the Gospel.*'

Limits of the Mosaic revelation.

And indeed, if Moses had taught the Israelites to expect a resurrection to eternal life, through faith in Jesus Christ, (and it is *thus* only that *we* can hope for it) then, it is plain, that, (as far as he did this) he would have been teaching them the Christian religion; and the Israelites whom he taught would have been on a level with the disciples *of the Apostles.* And this, we are distinctly and repeatedly assured in Scripture, is not the case. God thought fit, for reasons unknown to us, to reserve the Gospel-revelation to a later period. For 'the law had only the shadow of good things to come.'†

Moses not commissioned to make known the Gospel.

* Hebr. x. † Hebr. vii. 19.

And if he had even only gone as far as some of the Prophets who came long after him, did in giving, as they did, prophetic hints concerning the kingdom of the Christ, who was to bring to light immortal life through the Gospel, he would have been, so far, not teaching the LAW—the Dispensation committed to Him—but, the Gospel. For the 'bringing in of the better hope,'—that of eternal life, belongs to the GOSPEL and not to the LAW.

Abraham, indeed, 'eagerly desired* to see the day of the Lord Jesus; and he saw it and was glad.' In these words our Saviour is doubtless alluding to the sacrifice of Isaac, and to Abraham's being instructed on that occasion, that the transaction was a '*figure*'† representing the death and resurrection of Christ. But our Lord could not have meant that the revelation then made to Abraham was imparted by Moses to the whole nation of Israel.

Special revelations to certain individuals.

It is highly probable, indeed, that both Moses himself, and Abraham, and other eminent and highly favoured servants of God in those days, received, more or less, revelations of several things which they were not commissioned to impart to all the People.‡ And among other things, it is likely they were taught something concerning

* This is the exact sense of the original. (John, viii. 56:) though our version renders it 'rejoiced': but Abraham's *joy* is what is mentioned afterwards.

† See Hebrews, xi. 19.

‡ The eminently pious king, Hezekiah, however, seems to have had no idea, at least at the time when he composed his hymn (2 Kings, xx.) of any future state.

the resurrection, and concerning 'Jesus Christ, who should bring life and immortality to light through the Gospel.' And, accordingly, we find the very same Apostle who speaks of the Gospel as 'bringing in a better hope' than was in the *Law*, speaking also of some of the Patriarchs as 'looking for a better Country, that is, a heavenly.' *

Revelations to the People through Moses.

But when we look to what Moses wrote, by divine command, for the instruction and guidance of the Israelites, —and as belonging to the LAW, the Dispensation committed to him—we find him dwelling very fully, and minutely, and earnestly, on the temporal rewards and temporal punishments they were to look for, saying nothing at all about a resurrection and a day of judgment in the next world.

Many persons however are accustomed, in speaking of the present subject, to confound together two very different questions: (1) what was the actual belief of the Jews—or of some particular Jews—on this or that point? and (2) what was *revealed* to them in the LAW? No unprejudiced reader of that, can think that Moses designed to teach therein the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments as the Sanction of his Law.

§ 10.

Opinions of the Jews of later ages respecting a resurrection.

In after-ages, indeed—in the times which the New Testament history relates to—a large portion of the Jewish nation had come to be believers in a resurrection. For though the Sadducees, who denied the doctrine, were a very powerful and important sect,* the Pharisees and their followers, who maintained it, seem to have been considerably more numerous. And Jesus speaks of their deriving their hopes of eternal life from their Scriptures. The Scriptures, however, which He speaks of, included not only the LAW—the Books of Moses—but also the Books of the Prophets, who lived long after. And some of these contain hints respecting a future state, such as are not to be found in those of Moses.†

Some however make a careless use of those common words 'know,' and 'believe.' When discussing questions as to what was 'believed' by such and such persons, they sometimes speak as if there were but these two states of mind,—to believe a certain

* Acts, xxiii.

† The Book of Job (a book, however, of which it is not known when it was composed, or by whom) contains a passage which many suppose to relate to a resurrection. Others consider it as referring only to the deliverance of Job from his sufferings; which is related shortly after.

The passage taken by itself will bear either sense: but viewed in reference to the rest of the book, the latter sense appears far the more probable. For supposing Job and his companions to have known the doctrine of a resurrection, all the former part of their discourses appears quite unintelligible. See 'Essay I. on the Peculiarities,' &c.

doctrine, or to disbelieve it: forgetting, apparently, that belief admits of many different *degrees*, from a mere presumption, up to the most perfect confidence. Yet everyone's own experience might teach him this. For we commonly say, '*I believe* so and so is the case, but I am not *quite sure*.' Some, again, when they speak of what was 'known' to the Pagans, or to the Jews, seem to forget that the word 'knowledge' implies three things; (1) *confident belief*, (2) of what is *true*, (3) on sufficient *evidence*. For, no one could be said to *know* anything that was not true. And again, if any one had before him one of Euclid's demonstrations, he would not be said to *know* the conclusion (though a truth in reality fully proved) if he himself felt at all *doubtful* about it. And lastly, suppose two persons were quite positive, the one, that the moon is inhabited, and the other, that it is uninhabited, neither would be said to know the truth of his opinion; because, though one or the other must be, in fact, true, there is no sufficient *proof* of either.

Eternal life to be looked for only through Christ.

But though Jesus speaks of the Jews *thinking* [or seeming] to have had eternal life promised them in their Scriptures,* He does not say that they had *good grounds* for thinking so. Nor had they any good grounds, except so far as they perceived in those Scriptures the true interpretation of the prophecies relating to *Him*. For, *except through Him*, no revelation promises eternal life to any one. 'Search the Scriptures,'

* John, v. 39.

says He; 'for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and it is they that testify of *Me*.'

True meaning of Christ's appeal to Moses against the Sadducees.

On one occasion, however, when Jesus decided against the Sadducees, who denied a resurrection, He referred them to Moses, saying, 'that the dead are raised, even Moses showeth, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob: He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' *

Now this passage is sometimes misunderstood, though the meaning of Jesus is sufficiently plain to an attentive reader of common intelligence. There was a dispute between two parties, whether there were or were not to be a resurrection. They had both of them heard of the doctrine, and had been accustomed to debate the question. And He refers them to a passage which, *to men so circumstanced*, would afford an argument in favour of the doctrine. But Jesus does not say that Moses designed in this passage to *reveal* the doctrine to the unreflecting and gross-minded people *he* was instructing; or that for *that* purpose those words were sufficient. No man of common sense—much less an inspired lawgiver, such as Moses—would have entrusted so important a revelation to one slight, obscure, and incidental hint—so slight, that the passage seems to have quite escaped the notice of the Pharisees when disputing with the Sadducees on this very point.

* Luke, xx. 37.

Had Moses been commissioned to teach the Israelites that they were all to rise from the dead, and to stand before God's judgment-seat, and be rewarded or punished in another world, according as they had obeyed or disobeyed the Law he was delivering, he would not, we may be sure, have thought it sufficient for this purpose, to record the words, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' He would, doubtless, have dwelt on the rewards and punishments of a future state even *more* copiously and more strongly than he does on the temporal rewards and punishments which he does set before them.

§ 11.

Goods and evils of the present world the most striking.

For we all know how prone men are, even now, to think more of 'the things which are seen, which are temporal,' than of 'the things which are not seen, which are eternal.' This is so much the case even with Christians, and men much more civilised and more thoughtful than the ancient Israelites, that a Christian preacher finds it necessary to labour earnestly, day after day, and year after year, in drawing off men's thoughts from the goods and evils of this world, and turning their attention to the concerns of the world to come. And no preacher, after all his labour, succeeds in this so fully as he could wish. All men—but most especially a gross-minded, unthinking people like the Israelites,—are disposed to be less occupied with the

thoughts of a future life, than with the thoughts of health and long life on earth, and of wealth or poverty, victory or defeat, abundance or famine, &c. Now these temporal goods and evils Moses earnestly and repeatedly sets before the Israelites. And he is enabled to confirm his promises and threatenings by an appeal to their own *experience*; since they had seen, in several instances, the punishment of the rebellious, and the preservation of the obedient. Yet he finds it necessary to repeat these promises and threatenings, at great length, and in minute detail, over and over again.

Frequent repetition by Moses of temporal promises and threats.

These numerous and copious *repetitions* are likely to be not sufficiently attended to by a modern reader; because when he comes to something which, in substance, he had read a little before, he is apt to pass slightly over it. But this copiousness of detail, and frequency of repetition, are precisely the important point in the present question; because it is evident that a people who required to have temporal goods and evils so fully, and so strongly, and so repeatedly set before them, would have had those of another world even *more* copiously and earnestly urged on their attention, if it had been designed to make these the sanction of the Mosaic Law, and to reveal to them the doctrine of a resurrection.

You should, therefore, read over very carefully *all* the passages in the Books of Moses relating to the distributing of temporal rewards and punishments

(under a system of extraordinary Providence) to the Israelites; * and thus you will see reason to conclude with the most complete certainty, that if it had been designed to instruct them in the doctrine of a future state of retribution, this would not have been left to be collected from one or two incidental hints, but would have been set forth very plainly, and dwelt on very frequently, and at great length.

Internal evidence for the Books of Moses.

And you will also see how strong an *internal* evidence† of the truth of what Moses wrote, is afforded by the circumstance we have been speaking of.

For, had he been a false pretender, he would have known that he could not secure the constant *fulfilment* of his promises and threats. And his imposture would have been detected, when men found that they were not regularly rewarded and punished according as they obeyed or disobeyed his law. We may be sure, therefore, that a crafty impostor would not have trusted entirely to promises and threats of temporal goods and evils alone. He would doubtless have taught the Israelites to look for a state of future retribution also; which was done by the

* It is earnestly recommended that the student should *transcribe* the following passages:—*Exodus* xv. 26; xx. 12; xxiii. 20–31. *Leviticus* xxv. 17–22; xxvi. 3. *Numbers* xiv. 20; xxxii. 10; xxxiii. 55. *Deuteronomy* i. 35; iv. 1; v. 29; vi. 2; vii. 12; viii. 1; xi. 8; xv. 4; xvi. 20; xvii. 19; xxviii. 1; xxix. 22; xxx. 1; xxxi. 16; xxxii. 23–43.

It was thought better not to print them in an Appendix to this Lesson; because the student will far better impress them on his mind by writing them out carefully himself, and inserting the MS. in this volume. The very *tediousness* of such a task constitutes an essential part of the argument.

† Lesson X. on Evidence.

ancient heathen lawgivers. Many of these, probably, did not themselves believe in what they taught about Elysium and Tartarus;* but they judged it wise to try to make their people believe it, for the sake of keeping them in awe. And they knew that the falsity of their promises and threats respecting *another world* could not be detected by *experience.*

Moses, if an impostor, would have taught a future state of retribution.

And Moses no doubt would have proceeded in the same manner, had he been a pretender. But he was fully convinced that the Israelites really did live under that miraculous Providence which he described. And their own experience taught them that what he said was true.†

§ 12.

Distinguishing features of the Mosaic Law.

As for the particulars of all the various instructions given to the Israelites, both by Moses, and by the other writers of what is called the Old Testament, you must learn this (as was above observed) from a careful study of those books themselves. Our present design was merely to give a sketch of the general character of what is called the Mosaic Dispensation, especially as to the points wherein it differs from other religious systems.

* See Lesson II.

† Deut. iv. 3, 4.

Three great characteristics of the Law.

You are to keep in mind, then, 1st, That it was designed for one People alone, though it was preparatory to a religion intended for all the world; and its ordinances accordingly are not at all binding on us; 2ndly, It was full of very minute directions and regulations, designed, partly, to keep the Israelites separate from the Gentiles, and faithful to the true God, but partly, by their hidden typical meaning, to foreshow, and prepare the way for, the gospel-revelation; 3rdly, It was a theocracy; a system of direct, special, temporal government by God's extraordinary providence. And accordingly the sanction of the Mosaic Law was, not the rewards and punishments of a future state, but temporal blessings and judgments.

Danger of erroneous notions of the Law.

These are the points which it is the most important to keep clearly and constantly before the mind; for this reason among others: that mistaken notions on some of these points may endanger a man's Christian faith, by giving rise to difficulties and objections much greater than our religion,—such as it really is,—can ever be exposed to.

Objections there are, indeed (as was observed in the Lessons on Evidences),* to which no complete answer can be given, except by showing that there are much *stronger* objections on the opposite side.

* Lesson XIII.

But none of the objections to the Christian revelation, such *as it was really given*, are so strong as those brought against what it is sometimes *erroneously represented* to be.

§ 13.

Christians are not under the Law.

Suppose, for instance, any one is taught to believe, as a part of his religion, that some portion of the Mosaic Law is binding on Christians; —although the persons who teach this are far from being all of them agreed as to which precepts are binding and which not; and although the Apostle Paul speaks most clearly of the Gentiles as not being at all 'under the Law,'*—he would find, in this, a difficulty which is caused entirely by a misapprehension of Scripture.

Temporal rewards and punishments not the sanction of the Gospel.

Again, suppose a man to have taken up the notion that temporal blessings and calamities are, now, a sign of the divine favour or displeasure towards individuals or nations, and that whenever some great calamity occurs, we are at liberty to declare that such and such a sin has called down the divine vengeance; this leaves an opening for objections which can never be got over. For he sees that bad men often escape such temporal calamities, while much better men are exposed to them; and he knows also that Jesus Christ and his

* Rom. vi. 14.

Apostles endured great affliction in this world, and were rejected by the Jews on that very ground. So that this doctrine would make Scripture contradictory both to itself, and to daily experience.

Life and immortality brought to light by Christ.

And again, if he is taught that Moses was commissioned to reveal to the Israelites the doctrine of a resurrection, he will not be able to answer an infidel who may point out to him how very imperfectly (at best) the Books of Moses accomplish this purpose; and also, how completely at variance this is with the declaration that 'Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light.' So that here again, Scripture will be made to contradict itself.

All these will be great stumbling-blocks to the Christian. But if you will look to the plain meaning of the Sacred Books, without attending to the fanciful theories of uninspired men, all these difficulties will vanish.

Nothing revealed in the Gospel respecting those who have not heard it.

As for the question, what will be the lot, in another world, of those Jews or Pagans who never heard the Gospel, the only answer is, that the Gospel-revelation contains instructions designed for those who *have* heard the Gospel, as to what their duty is, in living according to it themselves, and doing their best to impart it to others.

As for those whom Providence has shut out from the knowledge of it, all inquiries respecting *them*

must be answered as our Lord answered Peter's inquiry what was to be the fate of the Apostle John: 'What is that to thee? follow thou me.'*

Books from which principally the above Lesson was compiled:—

Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. By Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Fifth edition. 8vo. 10s. London: John W. Parker, West Strand. Essay I.

Essays on some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul, and in other Parts of the New Testament. By the same.

Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State. See Lesson II.

The Divine Legation of Moses. By Bishop Warburton. 3 vols. 8vo. London: Tegg and Co.

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* John, xxi. 21, 22.

LESSON IV.

INTRODUCTION OF THE GOSPEL.

§ 1.

Points of distinction between the Law and the Gospel.

Of the reasons for believing Christianity to be of Divine origin, you will have learnt something in the 'Lessons on Evidences.' And as for the particulars of the Gospel-history and Gospel-doctrines, these must be learnt from a careful study of the Sacred writings. For, the present work is designed to furnish, not a *summary of Christian faith and duties*, but only an introduction to the study of the *history of religious worship*. And the object of this Lesson is merely to mark out the chief points that *distinguish* the Gospel-revelation not only from all false religions, but also from every other true revelation; and especially from that delivered through Moses, and which was designed to prepare the way for Christianity.

Although the Jews were in eager expectation at the time when the Lord Jesus appeared, of an ANOINTED Saviour [*Messiah*, or CHRIST]* whom the

* These words signify, in the Hebrew and the Greek, 'the Anointed;' from the ancient practice of *anointing* a *king*, or a *priest*, or a *prophet*, as a part of the ceremony of appointing him to his office.

predictions of their prophets had taught them to look for about that time, they did not expect Him to introduce anything that could be called a new religion; but rather to confirm and extend through the world the Mosaic Law. And this is what the unconverted Jews of this day expect.

Nevertheless of the prophecies relating to the Christ's Kingdom one was also quoted in Lesson IV on Evidences, to prove effectively to the benighted Jews of a new religion, distinct from that taught by Moses.

Promises of a new dispensation.

The most famous of these prophecies in relation to this point, is that of Jeremiah (xxxi. 31), "Behold the days come (are coming), saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel; * * * * * not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers," &c.

Now the system of Divine laws under which the Israelites lived, as in the books of Moses, is every-where called (in our version) the "Covenant" which the Lord made with them. And in the Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles the same word (in the Greek) is always applied to the Christian system.

§ 2.

The old and the new Covenants.

This however is likely to escape the notice of many readers, because, in our Version, the very same word,* which, in reference to the former

* Διαθήκη.

Law is generally rendered Covenant, is translated — when it has reference to the *Gospel* — by the word Testament. And even in the very passage of Exodus (ch. xxiv.) which is cited in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, the very word which our translators had before rendered 'Covenant,' they have changed into 'Testament.'* And yet the word is so far from having different meanings in reference to the *Law* and to the *Gospel*, that, on the contrary, both the Lord Jesus Himself, and his Apostles, most plainly draw a *parallel* between the two, and point out the circumstances of the former Covenant as types and shadows of the Gospel-dispensation.

Ratifying of Covenants by Sacrifice.

In particular, as it was and only the universal practice to ratify and sanction every kind of *Covenant* by the sacrifice of a *victim*, the shedding of whose blood was a necessary ceremony, so, this took place in both cases. Moses, on the occasion of the establishment of the Law, offered a sacrifice, and sprinkled the blood of the victim on the people; saying, 'This is the blood of the Covenant † [Testament] which the Lord hath made with you.' And the Lord Jesus at the Last Supper, when about to offer up Himself as a sacrifice, says, on giving to the disciples the wine which

Yet in Jeremiah xxxi. 31-37, it is expressly a New Covenant: and what is more remarkable, the very same words in the original are translated in Hebrews viii. 8 'mediator of a *Covenant*,' and in Hebrews, ix. 16, 'mediator of a *Testament*.'

* Exodus xxiv. 8. † Hebrews ix. 20.

represented his blood, that is, his life, 'This cup is the new Testament [*Covenant*] in my blood which is shed for you.'

You should carefully keep in mind, therefore, that in every passage of Scripture where the word 'Testament' occurs, it is always to be understood in the sense of '*Covenant*,' [or '*Dispensation*']—the giving of certain promises by the Most High, together with a declaration of what He requires of Man, in order to the attainment of what is promised. For, as has been just said, it is the very same word in the original that is sometimes rendered 'Covenant,' and sometimes 'Testament.' *

§ 3.

Christianity a new Religion.

The Christian religion, then, though springing out of the Mosaic, of which it was the fulfilment and completion,† yet was in itself a *new* Religion. It was the *fruit*, of which the Mosaic Dispensation was the *blossom*. And it was as distinct from it, and in many respects unlike it, as a fruit compared with the blossom which precedes it and produces it.

Three distinctions of the Gospel-dispensation.

The chief points which distinguish the Christian Dispensation from the Mosaic, are these three: i. *Spirituality*; ii. *Universality*; and, iii. *Unity*.

* See Note A. at the end of this Lesson.

† 'I am not come,' says our Lord, 'to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil.'

The new kingdom of God was to be 'not of this world,' but *spiritual*; it was to be open to *all* mankind as its subjects; and it was to admit all of them to *equal* privileges.

Spirituality of the Gospel-dispensation.

The former Kingdom of God was a kingdom of this world. The Lord was (as was pointed out in the last Lesson) not only the God, but the *temporal Ruler* of the Israelites; prescribing to them not only the religious rites with which He was to be worshipped, but also the civil regulations under which they were to live; and enforcing obedience by temporal rewards and penalties.

Jesus Christ, on the contrary, refused an earthly kingdom when attempts were made to force it on Him, and declared that 'his kingdom was not of this world.' He disclaimed all right to interfere in temporal concerns; saying to one who wished Him to decide between him and his brother, 'Who made me a judge or a divider over you?' He bid his hearers submit to the civil government of the Romans; saying, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.' And so far from promising victory, and long life, and worldly prosperity, to his followers, as a reward of their obedience to Him, He prepared them for suffering and death in his cause; even such as He endured Himself; and pronounced them 'blessed when men should hate and persecute' them in his cause; saying, 'great is your reward in Heaven.'

For, the rewards and punishments which formed

Rewards and punishments in the next world.

the sanction of this new Dispensation were those of the Next World; and those only. Jesus rebuked his disciples for proposing, in their zeal for his honour, to call down fire from heaven on a village which had rejected Him; as the Prophet Elias [Elijah] had been divinely commissioned to do, under the Old Dispensation.* Jesus reproved them, as 'not knowing what manner of spirit *they* were of;' He having 'come, not to destroy men's lives, but to save.'

But this was not from his regarding a rejection of Him as *more pardonable* than the sins of those who had lived before the days of the Gospel. He taught the reverse of this. For, shortly after, when He sent out seventy disciples to preach the Gospel, He denounced *heavier* judgments than what had fallen on sinners of old, against such as should reject that Gospel. 'It shall be *more tolerable*,' said He, 'for Sodom and Gomorrah' (which did suffer destruction by fire from heaven) 'in the day of judgment, than for that city.' And while He forewarned his disciples that, 'in the world they would have tribulation,' He promised to the faithful Christian 'to raise him up at the last day,' and to 'prepare a place' for such, in his 'Father's House.'

Thus different was the New Dispensation from the Old, in respect of the *rewards and punishments* which formed the sanction of each.

* Luke, ix. 54.

§ 4.

Spiritual worship.

The *Worship* also that was required under the Gospel, was of a more spiritual character than that prescribed by the LAW.

It is true, the Israelites were commanded to 'love the Lord their God, with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their strength.' But a great part of their service of Him consisted (as the Apostle Paul expresses it) 'in meats and drinks, and *carnal* ordinances;'—that is, outward bodily acts; most of which had (as has been before observed) an inward hidden signification in reference to the Gospel.

Jesus, on the contrary, tells the woman of Samaria, that the time is at hand 'when the true worshippers shall neither on Mount Gerizim, nor at Jerusalem, worship the Father;' but that they 'shall worship Him in Spirit and in Truth.'* What He means by worshipping in *truth*, and what the Apostle means by saying that 'the LAW was given by Moses, but grace and *truth* came by Jesus Christ,'† is, not that the Mosaic religion was not *true*, but that its ordinances contained the *shadow* of that of which the Gospel contains the substance. The *truth* of the Gospel is not (in reference to the Law) truth as opposed to *falsehood*, but *reality*, as contrasted with shadows and figurative [typical] representations.

* John, iv. 23. † John, i. 17.

Thus, we read, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, 'If the blood of bulls, and goats, &c. sanctify to the *purifying of the flesh*' (that is, remove *ceremonial* impurity, so as to enable a man to attend the assemblies of worshippers), 'how much more shall the blood of Christ purify your conscience from dead works,' &c.

Sacraments of the Law.

In the Mosaic religion, the number is very great of what may be not improperly called 'Sacraments.' For, a large portion of the very numerous ordinances of the LAW—the various sacrifices, purifyings, and other ceremonial observances—were of the nature of what *we* call Sacraments—that is, outward visible signs [figures], divinely appointed, and having an inward meaning connected with religion. The worship, in short, of the Israelites may be considered as almost made up of Sacraments.

Signification of the Mosaic ordinances hidden.

But a great part of the inward signification of these Sacraments was hidden from the worshippers; though they were taught that a divine blessing would accompany their observance of those Rites, in pious obedience to the Lord. In the Passover, for instance, all that they understood as signified in that Ordinance, was, the commemoration of their deliverance from the plague which slew the Egyptians. But the more important part of its signification, the sacrifice of the true 'Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world,' was not made known till the Gospel-revelation appeared.

§ 5.

Christian Sacraments.

Under the Gospel, on the contrary, the religious Rites instituted by Christ Himself were only the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: the one, for the admission of Members into his Church, and the other, to commemorate his death for Man's redemption, and to represent our partaking of his Spirit.

The one Sacrament denotes the spiritual *Birth* of the Christian; the other, the *continued support* of his spiritual *Life.**

And the signification of these two Ordinances is much more clearly and fully explained to Christians in the New Testament Scriptures than the signification of the Mosaic Ordinances was, in the LAW. And moreover, the directions given as to the mode of observing these Ordinances, are much less minute and particular than those given by Moses. For instance, there is nothing said in Scripture as to the use of *leavened* or unleavened Bread at the Lord's Table;—or the posture of the Communicants;—or the words to be used, &c. These particulars, and also all other forms and ceremonies for religious worship, Jesus left to be regulated in, and by, each Church from time to time, with merely the general

* John, vi. 48–63. See, also, 1 Cor. xii. 13, where the Apostle gives exactly the above view of the two Sacraments; saying, 'By one Spirit ye are all baptized into one body * * * * and have been all *made to drink* into one Spirit.'

direction from the Apostles, 'Let all things be done to edifying.'

Contrast between the Mosaic and the Christian Ordinances.

Under the LAW, in short, the Worship prescribed contained a great number of *outward acts*, striking to the senses, and according to forms which were precisely laid down; while the *inward signification* of those forms was obscure and partially hidden. Under the Gospel, on the contrary, the Worship prescribed was more spiritual; the external acts (as far as enjoined by Christ Himself) being very few, and simple, and without any precise directions as to the forms of them: while the inward signification of them is plainly made known.

§ 6.

Moral instruction of the Law, and of the Gospel.

And in what relates to *moral conduct* also, the precepts given, under the New Covenant, are much less numerous and less precise than those of the LAW. Not that Christians were meant to be less scrupulously careful in leading a virtuous life than the Israelites; but that they are left to regulate their conduct by the PRINCIPLES of the Gospel, according to the best of their own judgment, instead of having a multitude of precise *precepts* laid down for their guidance.

Just as the Christian-*Worship* was left to be regulated as to its FORMS, from time to time, by each Church, under the *general principle* of 'all being

done to edifying,' even so Christian-*practice* was left to be regulated by Christians themselves, in conformity with Gospel-*principles*, and the examples set before us by Christ and his Apostles.

The ancient Israelites, on the contrary, being a gross-minded and half-civilised people, in a condition corresponding to that of *childhood*, were not, generally, left to their own moral discretion, but were furnished with many precise rules of conduct. These answered to the exact regulations under which a child is necessarily placed. Such rules we gradually relax as he advances to maturity; not as supposing that good conduct is less required of men than of children; but that men are expected to be more capable of regulating their own conduct by their *own* discretion, and of acting on *principle*.

Christian Principles substituted for precise rules.

Even so did the Apostles endeavour to regulate men's conduct, not so much by laying down exact rules, as by implanting Christian *principles*, and cultivating Christian *dispositions*. They sought to make us 'meet for the inheritance of the saints;'—to prepare us for dwelling in the presence of our Blessed Master in heaven. 'Beloved,' says the Apostle John, 'we know not what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope on* Him' [Christ] 'purifieth himself even as He is pure.' †

* 'On Him' is the more exact translation than 'in Him.'
† 1 John, iii. 3.

§ 7.

Universality of the Gospel.

Besides Spirituality, another striking feature of the Christian Dispensation, as contrasted with the Mosaic, is, its UNIVERSALITY. It was to be *unlimited*, both in *time*, and in *place*. The Mosaic Law being only a preparation for the Gospel, was to come *to an end* on the establishment of the new Kingdom of Heaven, which is to *continue* to the end of the world.

And again, the Old Dispensation was designed for *one* Nation; the New, for *all* Nations. The 'People of God' was, henceforth, to comprise, not merely the 'Seed of Abraham after the flesh,' but all mankind, as many as would embrace the Gospel. 'As many as received Him (Jesus Christ), to them gave He power to become sons of God.' *

The language of Moses, and of those who came after him under the LAW, was, 'What nation is there so great, that hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon Him for?' and 'He hath not dealt so with any nation; neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws.' The language of Jesus Christ and his Apostles was, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature:' 'Go and teach [make disciples of] all nations:' 'There is neither Jew, nor Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free.'

* John, i.

And in writing to Gentile-Believers, the Apostle calls them* 'the Israel of God;' and says, 'if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'†

Title of Christians not at first employed by themselves.

Hence it was, no doubt, that the Apostles never applied the term 'Christians' to the members of any Church. It was not, of course, that they were ashamed of it: but they seem to have chosen not to adopt any *new* title, but to confine themselves to those which had been applied to God's People of old; in order to point out that He had now admitted Gentiles into the number. The Israelites had always been called 'brethren,' being of one Race. They are also called 'a *holy* People' ['saints'], as being dedicated to the Lord; and his 'chosen' ['elect'] People. And hence Christians were called 'the brethren,' the 'elect,' and 'saints,'—that is, *holy*, as being dedicated at Baptism to the Lord Jesus.

Christianity not a local religion.

One necessary circumstance, in such a Dispensation, was, that it should not be, like the Mosaic, a *local* religion. The Jews, indeed, clung (and still cling) to the notion that, even when all the world should be brought to the knowledge of the true God, still, their Nation should have a pre-eminence; and that the Temple of Jerusalem should be the great centre of religious worship for all mankind. And there are even some Christians who

* Galatians, vi. 16. † Galatians, iii. 29.

expect that Jesus Christ is to return to this earth in bodily person, and reign at Jerusalem in great worldly splendour for a thousand years.* But such notions are quite at variance with the whole character of the Gospel as described in our sacred Books.

The Christian Temple.

The Temple at Jerusalem—'the place which the Lord had chosen to cause his Name to dwell there,'†—that is, to manifest his presence—was to be totally and finally destroyed. And Jesus declared that 'Wheresoever even two or three should be gathered together in his Name, He would be there, in the midst of them.' And hence, a Christian *Congregation*—not a literal Building—was to be henceforth a portion of the Temple of the MOST HIGH. 'Know ye not,' says the Apostle Paul, 'that your bodies are a Temple of the HOLY GHOST which dwelleth in you?'‡

And as the collective Body of worshippers was called a *Temple*, so the individual Christians are called '*living stones*' of God's Temple. 'Ye, as living stones, are builded together into an holy

* See Lecture on Millennium—Scripture Revelations of a Future State.

† There are two words in the original which are both translated 'Temple:' HIERON, that is, the 'sacred place,' which included the Courts of the Temple; and NAOS (from a word signifying to '*dwell*'), the 'House of God,' which was the building in which *sacrifices* were offered. For, this was the main purpose of a temple; which was not (like the synagogues, and like our churches and chapels) a place for religious assemblies.

NAOS is the word used by our Lord when He calls his body a Temple, and by Paul, when he applies it to Christians.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 19.

Temple to the Lord.' * Hence arose the use of the word 'edify'—which is, literally, to 'build up'—as applied to Christian instruction and exhortation.

While Jesus Christ was on earth in bodily person, HE was the Temple of the Lord; inasmuch as 'in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.' † And, accordingly, He not only speaks expressly 'of the Temple of his body,' ‡ but makes several allusions (which are often overlooked) to this character of Himself.

§ 8.

Jesus Christ's body the second Temple.

And this, by the way, is a clear proof of his claiming a *divine* character. For the Jews understood (as He well knew) by 'the Temple of the LORD,' not a Synagogue,—a place of Assembly for worshippers, but 'the Habitation where his honour [glory] dwelleth.'

And it is worth remarking, that they also understood his calling Himself 'the Son of God,' and saying, 'that God was his *own proper*§ Father,'‖ as a claim to be a divine person. His words, indeed, might, in themselves, conceivably bear another meaning. But He must have *known* that *they* so understood Him. And if they had mistaken his meaning, He would not have failed to correct their mistake; else He would have been bearing false witness against Himself.

* 1 Peter, ii. 5. † Col. ii. 9. ‡ John, ii. 21.
§ The original shows that these words should be supplied.
‖ John, v. 18.

They *rightly* understood Him, therefore, to be claiming a divine character. And thereupon they pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy,* and liable to death by their law,† as teaching men to worship another besides the true God.

For they did not expect that the Christ was to be a *divine* person; as is plain from their being unable to solve the question which Jesus puts to them, about David's calling him LORD.‡ When, therefore, they understood Him to 'make Himself God,'§ this was so far from favouring their belief in Him as the Christ, that it convinced them of his being a false pretender and a blasphemer.

Christian worshippers the third Temple.

When Jesus departed from the earth, He sent to his disciples the promised 'Comforter,' to 'abide with them for ever;' even the Holy Spirit, whose Temple is the whole Body of Christians throughout the World. And every Christian congregation is a portion of this Temple; each individual Christian being called in Scripture a 'living stone' of it.

But our LORD takes care to make his disciples understand that it is not a *different Being* they are to look for, and who is to be their new Master; but a different *manifestation* of the same God;—a return of their Master to them under a new character. For He says expressly, 'I will not leave you *comfortless, I will come* unto you: * * * *I* will *see you*

* Matt. xxvi. 65. † Deut. 18. ‡ Mark, xii. 37.
§ John, x. 33.

again; and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man *taketh from you*; * * * *I* am *with you always*, even unto the end of the World;' * * * 'if any man love Me, he will keep my saying, and my Father will love him; and WE will come unto him, and make *our abode with him*.' And the like, in several other passages.

And the Apostles, accordingly, speak of 'the LORD (that is, Jesus Christ) being *the Spirit*,* and assure us that 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.'†

Baptism into the Holy Trinity.

The same God then who, to the Israelites, was made known only as *Creator and Governor* (God the *Father*), was afterwards manifested to Christians as being also the *Redeemer* (God the *Son*), and the *Sanctifier* (God the Holy Ghost); and He is to be acknowledged by them in this threefold manifestation, according to our Saviour's injunction to 'baptize in‡ the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

The Three Temples.

There have been, therefore, in all, three *Temples* of the ONE GOD; 1st, under the Old Dispensation, the Temple at Jerusalem; 2ndly, during the abode on Earth of the Lord Jesus, 'the Temple of his Body;' and 3rdly (that which is also often called Christ's body§), the holy Catholic [that is, Universal]

* 2 Cor. iii. 17. † Rom. viii. 9.
‡ More properly '*to*,' or '*into* the Name.' &c.
§ Eph. iv. 12, 16.

Church, comprising all believers throughout the world.

This third and final manifestation of the ONE GOD plainly belongs to a Dispensation characterised (as we have said) by UNIVERSALITY.

§ 9.

Unity of the Gospel Dispensation.

Another distinguishing feature of the New Dispensation was, as has been said, its UNITY [or *Oneness*]; by which we mean that it not only admits all mankind to Christian privileges, but all of them to *equal* privileges. 'There is,' as the Apostle expresses it, 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism;' * * * 'there is neither Greek, nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bondman or freeman.' *

This Christian Unity or Oneness is often alluded to, and earnestly dwelt on by our Sacred writers. But the passages relating to it are sometimes imperfectly understood, or entirely mistaken.

Mistakes respecting Christian Unity.

It does not mean *agreement* in *doctrine*; nor yet, *concord* and mutual goodwill; though these are strongly insisted on by the Apostles. But the *Unity* which they speak of is something distinct from these.

Nor, again, does it mean that all Christians belong —or ought to belong—to some *one Society on earth.* For this is what the Apostles never aimed at; and what never was actually the state of things, from

* Eph. iv. 5, and Col. iii. 11.

the time that the Christian Religion extended beyond the City of Jerusalem.

In what sense the Catholic Church is One.

The Universal [Catholic] Church of Christ is indeed ONE in reference to HIM, its supreme Head, in *Heaven*; but it is not *one Community* on earth. And even so, the *Human Race* is *one* in respect of the one *Creator* and *Governor*; but this does not make the whole Human Race *one Family*, or one *State* [Political-Community].

All men, again, ought to live in *peace*, and to be kindly disposed towards every fellow-creature. And all are bound to *agree* in thinking and doing whatever is right. But they are not at all bound to live under one *single government* extending over the whole World. Nor, again, are all nations bound to have the *same form* of government, regal, or republican, &c. That is a matter left to their discretion. But all are bound to do their best to promote the great *objects* for which all government is instituted;—good order, security of person and property, justice and public prosperity.

And even so, the Apostles founded Christian-Communities [Churches] all *based on the same principles*, and having the same *object* in view, but quite independent of each other, and having no one common Head on Earth.

Besides the several Churches in Judæa, in Galilee, in Samaria, and elsewhere, we find the Apostle Paul himself founding many distinct Churches, both in Asia and in Europe. And it does not appear that

these had any common Head on Earth, except Himself; nor that he appointed any one to succeed him in having 'the care of all the Churches.'*

No common government on Earth of Christian Churches.

And if you look to the account of his taking leave of the Elders [Clergy] of Ephesus and Miletus, whom he expected never to see again,† you will plainly see that he could not possibly have had any notion of any supreme *central authority*, lodged either in the Church of Jerusalem, or of Rome, or in Peter and his successors, or in any *General Council.* For, the occasion was one on which he could not have failed to bid them have recourse, in case of any difficulties or disputes arising among them (such as he actually foresaw), to some such central Authority, if any such had existed.

It is plain, therefore, that the Christian Unity spoken of in Scripture did not consist in the placing of all Christians in one Society under one government on Earth.

It consisted (as we have said) in the admission of all men to equal Christian privileges, instead of having two or more different kinds or *degrees* of Christianity, for different classes of persons.

* 2 Cor. xi. 28.
† Acts, xx. See Discourse on the Search after Infallibility.

§ 10.

Various Degrees under the Law.

Now there did exist something of this kind under the Mosaic Dispensation. The 'Devout Gentiles' (sometimes called 'Proselytes of the Gate'), mentioned in the foregoing Lesson, were admitted to worship in the outer court of the Temple, and to frequent the Synagogues. Those who had embraced the whole Mosaic Law (who were called 'Proselytes of righteousness'), were accounted as ranking higher than the others, and next in holiness to the Israelites by birth. Then, of the born-Israelites, the *Levites* were more especially dedicated to the Lord than those of the other Tribes, and were employed in his immediate Service about the Tabernacle, or the Temple. Of the Levites themselves, again, the Family of Aaron were alone admissible to the Priesthood. And lastly, of the Priests themselves, none except the High Priest was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies,—the inmost and most sacred place in the Temple, where he offered a sacrifice once every year.*

Differences between man and man, independently of the Dispensation.

Now, these several gradations, you should observe, are something quite different from the various degrees of moral worth and piety, or of intelligence and knowledge, in individuals. One Israelite (and the like may be said of Christians) might exceed another, of

* Heb. ix.

the same Tribe and Family, in pious obedience to the Lord; and a third might surpass them both. But these differences would not be distinctions *introduced by the Mosaic Religion*; but merely those of the individual characters of those men. And again, a pious Israelite, of superior understanding, and of a reflecting turn of mind, and of more extensive knowledge than the generality, would have a clearer, and more intelligent, and more comprehensive view of some parts of the Revelation given him, and of God's Providence, generally, than another, equally pious, but of humbler powers and attainments.

And the like must be the case with Christians also.

But these differences between one man and another, are such as we find to exist in reference to *all* subjects, and do not particularly pertain to the Mosaic system of Religion; not being introduced and created by it.

Those distinctions, on the contrary, which were noticed just above, are such as did specially belong to the religion of Moses, and formed a part of the Dispensation.

§ 11.

No distinct Classes of Christians.

The Gospel, on the other hand, admitted of no such gradations as those established under the LAW.

Various Officers, indeed, were appointed in the Christian Churches: because no Society

can subsist without them. But all persons, of whatever Race or Family, were admissible, if properly qualified, to any Office.

And again (as was said just above), men of superior intelligence and mental cultivation will be able, by piously and humbly employing their powers in the study (among other things) of the Christian-Scriptures, to take a clearer and more intelligent view of the Gospel-revelation, than those of ordinary abilities and education; provided they are careful not to indulge in rash conjectures respecting things beyond human reason, and which God has not thought fit to reveal.

Such men, if they do use this care, will find that the more they advance in general cultivation of mind, the more will the prospect of divine wisdom and goodness spread around them; the horizon, as it were, extending itself in proportion to their elevation.

But this (as was observed above) is a kind of distinction between man and man which was not *introduced by the Gospel*, but takes place in *all* subjects. Nor does such a distinction make one man *more a Christian*—properly speaking—than another. In fact, a learned Philosopher would be a *worse* Christian than pious men of ordinary ability and education, if he were content to remain, in point of religious knowledge, just *on a level* with these, while in all *other* matters he was intellectually superior to them. He would be like a person offering as the *tithe* of an increased produce the same *absolute*

amount as would be a fair proportion from a smaller or less fertile field.

Gospel-privileges open to all.

And in respect of piety of sentiment also, and purity of conduct, one man may be a better Christian than another —that is, he may make a *better use* of his Christian-privileges. But the *Gospel itself* does not exclude any man from any Christian-privileges to which it admits others.

This is one of the points wherein (as has been said) it differs from the Mosaic LAW.

§ 12.

Unity of the Gospel-religion, a stumbling-block.

And this feature of the Gospel was one which proved a great stumbling-block to the Jews. They could not easily reconcile themselves to the thought of Gentiles being placed completely on a level with them. And they clung to the idea that the Jews by Race must continue to be in an especial manner God's peculiar People, even when both they and the Gentiles should have become subjects of Christ's kingdom.

And even among the Gentile-Christians themselves, there seems to have been a tendency to consider the different 'spiritual [miraculous] gifts' bestowed on different persons, as dividing Christians into so many distinct Orders. This tendency you will find the Apostle Paul earnestly contending against, in several parts of his writings; especially in 1 Cor. xii.

The miraculous gifts were bestowed not for the benefit of the possessor, but of the Church. And they did not either *prove* the possessor to be peculiarly acceptable to God, or, necessarily *make* him so. For, Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed his Master, had been endowed, along with the other Apostles, with miraculous powers. And our Lord declares that He will say, at the Day of Judgment, to some who should boast of having, in his Name, 'done many mighty works,' I know you not; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity.

Attempts to make different Classes of Christians.

Yet in all Ages of the Church, there has been a tendency, more or less, to draw some unwarranted distinction between ordinary Christians, and those to whom the name of SAINTS has been confined, either from their having been inspired, like the Evangelists and Apostles, or from their being supposed to possess some extraordinary personal holiness, beyond what is expected of Christians generally.

The Apostles, on the contrary (as was observed above), call *all* Christians 'Saints;' as being all *dedicated* to Christ in Baptism, and all admitted to be equal partakers (as far as relates to their own holiness of character, and power of becoming acceptable to God) of his sanctifying Spirit. There is no hint given that a less degree of personal holiness will suffice for us, than for an Apostle. And Peter or Paul, however superior to us in their miraculous gifts, yet called themselves Saints in reference not

to anything *peculiar* to them, but to what was *common* to them with us.

Christianity not two Religions, but one.

Nevertheless one may find persons, even now, who seem to regard Christianity as not, in reality, one Religion, but two: one, for persons of pre-eminent holiness, or who are admitted to certain superior Christian privileges, beyond the generality; and the other for the multitude; who are to believe implicitly whatever the most eminent Saints think fit to impart, and to do whatever they bid them.

But nothing can be more at variance than such a notion is with the whole character of the Gospel-dispensation. For, this was designed (as you may plainly see, from Scripture) as a revelation to men of all classes, in every tolerably civilised country. And the endeavour of the Apostles was, to '*make known* the *mystery* of the Gospel' to *all*, in proportion as they were *able* and *willing* to receive it. And they laboured, by assiduous instruction and exhortation, to *make* men, more and more, thus able and willing. They urged them to '*grow* in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.' And they reckoned themselves to be 'pure from the blood of all men,' only inasmuch as they 'had not shunned to declare [make known] to them *all* the counsel of God.'

As for establishing different classes of Christians, some admitted to higher privileges than others,—some '*elect*,' and some not elect,—some '*Saints*,'

or '*Evangelical*,' and some not—there is no hint of anything of the kind, but quite the reverse.*

§ 13.

The three characteristics of Christianity a mark of truth.

When you look back to these distinguishing points in the Gospel-dispensation which have been here noticed—its *Spirituality*, *Universality*, and *Unity*—as well as to several other remarkable features of it, you will perceive what a strong confirmation they afford of its Divine origin.

It was altogether the most unlikely thing† to have occurred to the mind of any man, whether dreaming enthusiast or crafty impostor. And of all men, *Jews* were the most unlikely to have imagined anything of the kind. Indeed, the great stumbling-block to the Jews was its being so utterly at variance (as has been remarked above) with all their most deeply-rooted prejudices, and all their long-cherished hopes.

But it was almost equally at variance with many of the notions of the Heathen also. And these latter had nearly as much difficulty in receiving a religion from Jews—a people generally despised by them—as the Jews had, in acknowledging the 'Gentiles as fellow-heirs' with themselves.

And both parties—Jews and Gentiles—had never conceived an idea of such a thing as a religion without any literal *Temple*, without an *Altar*, without

* See Note B. at the end of this Lesson.
† See Lesson X., on Evidences.

Sacrifices, and without any Sacrificing-Priest on earth.*

Such a Religion could never have been *invented*, in those days, by any man, Jew or Gentile; and could never have been established throughout the chief part of the civilized World, except by the overpowering force of miraculous proofs.

* Our word 'Priest' is formed from PRESBYTEROS; which is translated an 'Elder' in our version of the Bible. But the word which our translators have rendered '*Priest*' is, in the original Greek, HIEREUS; in Latin SACERDOS; and is always applied to a *sacrificing*-minister. And the word is never applied to any one under the Christian-dispensation, except Jesus Christ alone, our great and only High-Priest, who offered up Himself a Sacrifice for Man's redemption.

Now we may be sure that, if the Apostles had ordained any one to the office of a *sacerdotal* [sacrificing] Priest, or had designed that there should be any such in the Christian-Church, there would have been mention made of it in the Book of Acts, and in the Apostolic Epistles.

Whenever the title of 'Priest' [Hiereus] is applied to any Christians, it is applied to *all* Christians, (Rev. v. 10, and 1 Pet. ii. 9,) as offering up themselves to God. (See Discourse on Christian Priesthood, appended to Bampton Lectures.)

[Note A., § 2, p. 86.]

It would be unsuitable to a work of this kind to enter on a discussion of the interpretation of a disputed text, which must depend partly on the sense of certain words in the original languages. But the mere English reader may easily perceive,

I. That the passage in Exodus, xxiv., which is cited in Hebrews, ix., ought to have been translated alike in both places; and that the same words, occurring in Hebrews, viii. 6, and in Hebrews, ix. 15, ought to have been translated in both by the same English words.

II. That though *we* are accustomed to connect the idea of a covenant [compact] with signing and sealing, and not with any *death* of a sacrificed victim; and again, are familiar with the idea of a man's bequeathing his property by a *Will*, which is to take effect after his death, —with the Jews, it was the reverse. They (as well as many other ancient nations; as may be seen in many passages of Homer), were accustomed to see every covenant ratified by the blood of a victim. And, on the other hand, Wills, they had none; since the Mosaic Law disposed of a man's property at his death. Accordingly, no one, in writing to *Hebrews* (even though speaking of the Gospel

alone) would have been likely to introduce a reference to Wills. But—

III. The writer is evidently drawing a parallel between *the Mosaic Law* and the *Gospel*. Now the *Law* was not at all of the nature of a *Will*; [Testament] not being bequeathed to the Israelites by Moses at his *death*, but fully established forty years before. And, accordingly,

IV. You may observe, that, in the passage before us, the parallel drawn is not between Christ and *Moses*, but between Christ and the *victim* slain by Moses, as the ratifier of the Covenant.

To speak of the death of a 'Testator,' therefore, totally destroys the parallel which plainly was in the writer's mind, and makes the whole passage unmeaning. But when the *death* spoken of is understood of the death of the sacrificed victim—even Jesus Christ, who offered Himself to die in our stead, and for our deliverance, the parallel which the writer is dwelling on becomes intelligible and striking. See Hinds on the Authorized Version, p. 82.

[Note B., § 12, p. 109.]

It was remarked in the Lessons on Evidences, (Lesson 14), that some of the objections to Christianity are such as some able and learned men have found answers to, but which the generality of Christians cannot be expected to answer, or even to *understand*. But this circumstance does not divide Christians into different classes admitted to unequal Christian-privileges.

A man who is acquainted with the virtues of certain medicines, and knows how to apply them for the cure of some disorders he is subject to, has no advantage over another man who is ignorant of those medicines, and at the same time *exempt from those diseases*. And in like manner, one man possessing learning, and powers of deep reflection, may perceive certain difficulties, and feel the force of certain objections, which do not strike an ordinary man. At the same time he may so apply his knowledge and his abilities, as to find answers to those objections, and solutions of those difficulties. But another man, inferior to him in mental powers and cultivation, if he is but able to give a good 'reason of the hope that is him,' is not worse off, *as a Christian*,* than the former; though, as a philosopher, he is inferior to him, and though he is unable to understand either the answers to certain objections, or the objections themselves.

* See 1 Cor. xiii. and 1 Peter iii. 15.

Books from which principally the above Lesson was compiled:—

History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity. By the Rev. Dr. Hinds (afterwards Bishop of Norwich), 2 vols., 8vo. London: B. Fellowes, Ludgate-street.

The Three Temples of the One God contrasted. By the same. Second edition, 8vo.

Scripture and the Authorized Version of Scripture; being the substance of Two Ordination Sermons, with Notes and a Glossary of Words which have become obsolete in the sense which they bear in the translation of the New Testament. By the same. 8vo.

The Churchman's Theological Dictionary. By the Rev. Robert Eden, M.A., F.S.A.: late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Second edition. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.

On the Omission of a System of Articles of Faith, Liturgies, and Ecclesiastical Canons. Essays on Some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. Essay VI. By R. Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Fifth edition. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.

Sermons on Various Subjects. By the same. (Discourse on Christian Saints.)

The Kingdom of Christ Delineated, in Two Essays on our Lord's own Account of His Person, and of the Nature of His Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers, and Ministry of a Christian Church as appointed by Himself. By the same. Fourth edition, 8vo. Essay I.

Christ the only Priest under the Gospel. Sermon V. Published with the Bampton Lectures for 1822. 'The Use and Abuse of Party Feeling in matters of Religion.' By the same. Third edition.

LESSON V.

ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM.

§ 1.

Christ's Apostles set over his kingdom.

When the bodily presence of our Divine Master was withdrawn from the earth, his Apostles proceeded, according to his directions, to establish 'the kingdom of heaven,' over which He had placed them, saying, 'I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.'

Difference in the Gospel preached before, and after, Christ's departure.

For, that Gospel [good tidings] which had been proclaimed [preached] by Himself and his disciples, during his personal ministry, was, that 'the kingdom of heaven was *at hand*.' That kingdom was, *then*, only in preparation. It was not completely begun, till the Apostles, after the outpouring on them of the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, founded at Jerusalem the first Christian Church, and baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus about three thousand persons, who were thus enrolled as subjects of that kingdom.

Christian churches established.

The number of these in Jerusalem increased rapidly. Other churches were established in Judæa, in Galilee, in Samaria, and elsewhere. And a few

years after, the Apostles having learnt by an express revelation—quite contrary to their own expectations—that Gentiles were to be admitted, on equal terms, as subjects of Christ's kingdom, great numbers of churches, consisting chiefly of these, arose in various parts of the world.

Scanty records of the mode of founding churches.

Although, however, mention is made in Scripture of several of these Churches, we have only incidental, slight, and scanty accounts of the way in which the Apostles proceeded in founding them. Very few particulars are given of the regulations established—of the appointment of the several Orders of Ministers—of the Divine Service celebrated—or, in short, of any of the details of matters pertaining to a Christian Church.

Synagogues converted into Christian churches.

One reason for this, probably, was, that a Jewish Synagogue, or a collection of Synagogues in the same neighbourhood, *became* at once a *Christian Church*, as soon as the worshippers, or a considerable portion of them, had embraced the Gospel, and had separated themselves from unbelievers. They had only to make such additions to their public Service, and such alterations, as were required by their reception of the Gospel; leaving everything else as it was.

And when Gentile churches began to be formed, they would naturally conform to the same model.

Now, Jewish synagogues, and all things pertaining

to them, were so familiarly known in the days of our sacred writers, that there was no need to enter into any minute particulars respecting the officers, regulations, and practices of a synagogue.

§ 2.

Reasons for omitting particulars relative to Christian churches.

Nevertheless, it seems probable that we should have found in Scripture something more than we do find, or incidental notices of some of these particulars, if there had not been some especial reason for omitting them.

And most likely the reason was this: If our Scriptures had contained very exact and full accounts of the forms of ordaining Christian Ministers —of the several Orders of Ministers—and of the duties assigned to each—and also of the modes of celebrating the Sacraments, and other parts of divine Worship, together with all the particulars of the church government established in each place—if all this had been recorded in Scripture, it is probable that Christians in after ages might have thought themselves bound to conform as minutely to the precedents thus recorded, as the Jews did, to the enactments of the LAW.

Apostolic institutions suited to their own times.

And yet, some things ordained by the Apostles (who, we know, *must,* in many points, have given directions that are *not* recorded in Scripture,) may have been such as would not have

suited all Ages and Countries; though they were, at the time, the very wisest and best.

It is likely, therefore, that the sacred writers were withheld by the Holy Spirit from recording distinctly several matters of detail, on purpose that Christian Churches might be left free, as to those matters, to make such regulations, at their own discretion, as should be best suited to each time and place.

Creeds, catechisms, &c., used by the Apostles, not recorded.

The same may be said with respect to the Creeds, Catechisms, and Forms of Prayer, and of administering the Sacraments, which were in use in the days of the Apostles. We have no record in Scripture of any of these. And yet it seems quite incredible, humanly speaking, that no one of the Apostles, or of their attendants (such as Mark and Luke), should have committed to writing any form of catechetical instruction, or Confession of Faith, &c., such as they must have habitually used, and must have considered highly important. We cannot doubt that some of them would have done so, had they not been supernaturally restrained. Indeed, we know that those who came *after* the times of the Apostles, did write down Creeds, and Rules, and other compositions, such as we have been speaking of; several of which have come down to us. And it seems so natural to do so, that we may be sure some of the Apostles, or of their companions, would have done it, had they not been prevented by some superior power.

Evidence for Christianity from omissions.

And this, by the way, furnishes one of the many proofs that Christianity could not have been a system of man's devising; since we find in the New Testament-books an *omission* of some thing which they certainly *would* have contained, had the writers been left to themselves. This argument would be equally strong, even if we had been quite unable even to conjecture the *reason* of the omission. For if the religion was not from men, it must have been from God.

§ 3.

Catechisms, &c., why not recorded.

But it probably was the design of the Holy Spirit that men should not have set before them, *as a part of Scripture*, any compendious Summary of Christian Doctrine, in the form of a Catechism or Confession of Faith, or any such composition. For this might have led them to neglect that careful *search* of the Scriptures, and comparison of one part with another, which seems to have been designed as a most useful exercise of the mind on religious subjects.

And again, it was probably designed by Divine Wisdom, that each church should be left to adopt, from time to time, such Creeds [or Symbols], Prayers, and other Forms, in accordance with Scripture-truth, as might be found best to suit the circumstances of the Age and Country. But if such Forms, &c., had been found *in Scripture*, Christians

would have been likely to feel themselves tied down to the use of those, and no others, for ever.

The Lord's Prayer.

We find, accordingly, in Scripture, only one short form of Prayer, for general use, recorded. And that one, having been taught by Jesus to his disciples *before* the great work of redemption had been accomplished, contains no allusion to Himself as the Redeemer. Accordingly, He afterwards tells His disciples, 'Hitherto ye have asked nothing of the Father *in my name*; ask, and ye shall receive; that your joy may be full.' * * * * 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, He will give it you.'* This prayer, therefore, although (as was to have been expected), it has always been in use among Christians of various ages and countries, could not supersede the use of other prayers.

Matters left to the discretion of each Church.

These matters, and also all that relates to the preserving of order and good government in a church, Christians were left—when the guidance of the inspired Apostles was withdrawn—to regulate for themselves, according to the best of their own judgment; conforming as closely as possible to Gospel-*principles*; and keeping always in view the

* See Hinde's History, p. 105. Note on the Scriptural use of the word 'Name.'

Judging from the examples of the prayers recorded in Acts, i. 24, and also in Acts, vii. 59, it should seem that the earliest Christians understood their Master's injunctions to 'ask in his Name,' as authorizing them to direct their prayers *to Himself*, worshipping the Father in Christ Jesus.

Appended to this Lesson will be found an attempt to adapt the LORD'S PRAYER to Christian use conformably to this view.

great *object* for which a church is instituted—Christian edification and the salvation of souls. Where Scripture gives no express directions, we are bound to decide—not only as to these points, but as to *all* parts of our conduct—according to our best discretion, with earnest prayer for the enlightening grace of God's Spirit.

§ 4.

Duty of obedience to Church authority.

And there can be no doubt that every Christian is bound, in duty to his Divine Master, to pay obedience to the enactments and ordinances—not adverse to Scripture—of the Church he belongs to, though consisting of uninspired men. For this is indispensably necessary for the existence of *any* SOCIETY. Now it is certain that it is the will of the Lord Jesus that his People should be members of those Christian-Societies called Churches. And whoever sanctions the forming of a Society, does, thereby, give his sanction to everything that is essential to a Society.

Things essential to a society.

There are three things which necessarily pertain to every Society [Community], and are implied by its existence: 1st, *Officers*; 2ndly, *Rules*; and 3rdly, the power of admitting or excluding *Members*

Officers essential to a society.

i. Whatever may be the character and objects of any Society—whether it be a political Society [or civil community], commonly called a *State*,—or a scientific,—or a mercantile,—or a religious Society,

such as we call a *Church*—in all cases it must have some kind of Government, and consequently, certain Officers to administer that Government; to manage the affairs of the Body, and to exercise some control over the individual members of it.

Rules of a society.

ii. There must also be, in every society, some kind of *Rules*: whether called Laws, or Statutes, or Canons, or by whatever other name; and these rules must be enforced by some kind of *Penalties* against violations of them.

Admission and exclusion of members.

iii. And there must also exist, somewhere, a power of determining who shall be *members* of the Society:—what persons shall be admitted or refused admittance into it, or expelled, or restored.

These three things, are, as we have said, essential to *every* kind of society.

As for a Civil Community [a State], *that* is not a *voluntary* Society; but must have, from the very nature of the case (as was pointed out in the Lessons on Money-matters), a *coercive* power, that is, it is necessary that all persons residing in each country should be *compelled* to submit to the government of that country. And there is no *limit*, except in the justice and wisdom of the rulers, to the punishments denounced against those who disobey the laws.

Ultimate penalty in a voluntary society.

But in a *voluntary* society (such as Christ designed a Church to be), the ultimate penalty for disobedience is *expulsion*, that is, whatever other pe-

nalty any offender is liable to, he must *either* submit to it, or else be *removed* from the society. 'If he refuse,' says our Lord, 'to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man,'—that is, no longer a member of that Church.*

A Church has no rights over those excluded.

And even as a 'heathen man'—one who never belonged to your Society, has no claim to any of its privileges, nor is subject to its government, or liable to its penalties, so, if one who *has* been a member of it, has renounced its authority, or has been formally expelled from it, he is placed on the same footing. It would be unfair, on the one hand, for *him* to claim any of its advantages, or, on the other hand, for *you* to attempt to subject him to its laws and its penalties. He, and that particular Society, have thenceforth nothing to do with each other.†

* That is, of that particular church whose authority he has renounced. It does not follow that he may not be a member of some other church.

Indeed it has often happened, amidst the many unhappy dissensions among Christians, that *all* the members of a church that is completely opposed to another, are shut out from Christian intercommunion with the other church.

But though you may be justified in saying, Such and such a person is not, and cannot be, considered a member of *this* particular church, you have no right to pronounce him thereupon excluded from the universal [Catholic] Church of Christ.

† Sometimes it has happened that some church, though claiming no power over a 'heathen man,' has yet called in what is termed the 'secular arm,' [that is, the civil power.] to punish as heretics, persons who have renounced allegiance to that church, or whom it has excommunicated, [expelled.] But this is in manifest opposition to what our Lord says in the passage above referred to; as well as to his declaration that his 'kingdom is not of this world.'

Whether those persons were justly or unjustly excommunicated, —or whether they were right or wrong in seceding,—the church

§ 5.

Power of making laws.

And here you should observe, that it is necessary not only that every community should *have* laws, enforced by certain penalties, but also that it should have power to *make* laws, from time to time, not in opposition to the fundamental principles of the Society, but for the carrying out of those principles.

For it would be impossible to lay down rules, once for all, so minute and precise as to meet every possible case, and never to need any addition. Even the Mosaic law, which was extremely particular in its directions, was not sufficient: without some enactments, made by competent authority, to decide, for instance, what was or was not to be accounted *work*, and consequently prohibited on the Sabbath-day; and many other such particulars.

Powers of the rulers of the Jewish Church.

Our Lord does indeed censure the Jewish rulers for having, in some points, made absurd and frivolous regulations; and, in some, having 'made the Word of God of none effect, through their tradition.' In the one case, they had made an *ill use* of the power intrusted to them: in the other, they had altogether *exceeded* their power. But nevertheless He acknowledges that the power did exist in the rulers of the Jewish Church,

which has renounced them, or which they have renounced, has clearly no more rights over them, according to our Lord's express declaration, than it has over a 'heathen man.'

and that obedience was due to it when their enactments were not at variance with God's laws. 'The Scribes and Pharisees,' said He, 'sit in Moses' seat;' that is, they are his successors in the office of making and enforcing regulations for the Jewish Church: 'whatsoever *they bid you* observe and do, *so do ye*; but do ye not after their works; for they say, and do not.'

Necessary powers entrusted to a Christian Church.

Now the rules laid down in Scripture for a Christian Church are (as was remarked above) far less numerous and less precise than those of the LAW. So that it was even much more necessary that a Christian Church should have that power which our Lord Himself acknowledged to have been possessed by the Scribes and Pharisees.

And since it was undoubtedly his design that there should always be Christian Churches, 'even to the end of the world,' there can be no doubt that He intended these Churches to possess all those three requisites above-mentioned, without which no Community of any kind can subsist. And hence we may feel assured that the Officers of Christian Churches, and the rules established in them (when not adverse to Gospel-principles), and the penalties which form the sanction of those rules, and the power which every Church exercises of admitting or excluding persons as *members*,—all these must, we are sure, have the sanction of our Divine Master Himself.

§ 6.

Powers expressly conferred on Christian Churches.

All this we might infer, as has been said, from the mere fact of his having sanctioned the formation of Christian-Communities. But besides this, He expressly conferred on his Apostles—the first founders and first rulers of Christian Churches—those very powers just mentioned.

The power of 'binding and loosing,'*—that is, of making and annulling decisions and regulations,—He distinctly conferred on the Apostles: declaring that their decisions should be ratified [bound] 'in Heaven,' that is, sanctioned by Himself.†

Powers committed to Peter and the other Apostles.

This declaration He made first to Peter, as being the person chosen to take the lead in laying the first foundation of a Christian Church; both among the Jews, on the Day of Pentecost, and afterwards among the Gentiles.‡ But afterwards, a little before his departure, He appoints a kingdom to the Apostles generally.§ In addressing Peter, He mentions the 'keys of the Kingdom of Heaven;' that is, the power of admitting members into the Christian Church, and of excluding them. But this is, in fact, included in the appointment to the Kingdom; since

* That was the phrase which was, and still continues, in use among the Jews in that sense.

† Matt. xvi. 19. ‡ Acts, ii. and x. § Luke, xxii. 29.

the rulers of a Church must be entrusted with this power.

And He also expressly confers on the Apostles the power of inflicting and remitting Church penalties* for offences against the society,—what we call *ecclesiastical* offences. And it is likely that, besides this, his words had reference also to their office of preaching 'baptism for remission of sins,' and of administering or refusing baptism, according as each person might appear in their judgment fit or unfit. That is, the qualifications for being admitted into Christ's kingdom, and for being allowed to continue a subject of it, having been laid down by Himself as the Supreme Head, his ministers were left to decide in each case, who was or was not thus qualified. *Ecclesiastical offences.*

This, doubtless, was our Lord's meaning when He spoke of the 'keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.' And it is also probable one part of what He meant to include in the power of remitting or retaining sins.

But this at least is quite certain, that no mere man can have power to forgive sins *as against* GOD; or to grant or refuse admission into the realms of heavenly bliss; which is the office of the Lord Jesus Himself at the Day of Judgment. By Him his disciples were merely authorized to admit men into his kingdom on earth— *Power of forgiving sins, and of the keys.*

* John, xx. 23.

that is, his Church: and to pronounce, not what *particular individuals*, but what *kind* of persons should have remission of sins against GOD, and should attain eternal life — namely, those whose penitence and faith are seen by Him to be sincere.

The Apostles had no power of reading men's hearts.

He might, had He seen fit, have gifted his Apostles and other Ministers with the faculty of reading any man's heart, and foreseeing the future course of his life; and He might thus have enabled them to pronounce positively of an individual that his sins were pardoned by the MOST HIGH, and that he would inherit eternal life. But this gift our Lord did not think fit to bestow on his Apostles, or on any man. They were left to judge as they could, of the sincerity of each man's professions, and of the steadfastness both of his faith and of his whole Christian-character. And in this they were liable to be deceived; as is evident from the case (among others) of Simon the sorcerer;* for he would not have been admitted to baptism, if it had been perceived at the time that he was 'in the bond of iniquity.'

Sins which a society may pardon.

But offences *against a society*, that society has a right to pardon; just as an individual may forgive sins [trespasses] against himself. Indeed our Lord has, as you know, commanded us thus to forgive. But of course He did not mean that we have

* Acts, viii.

power to pardon sins as against God. For, *that* belongs to Him alone. If any one does some wrong to you, or to a Society, he also, by doing this wrong, sins against God. It rests with you, or with the Society he has wronged, to pardon the *wrong as against his fellow-men.* But God alone can pardon the sin against God.

§ 7.

All the requisites of a society, expressly conferred.

All those three requisites, then, which we have been speaking of as essential to every Society, our Lord expressly established. He appointed *officers*, [ministers,] and He conferred the power of enacting *rules*, and of admitting and excluding *members.*

And it is plain that what He said to those particular disciples He was addressing, could not be meant as limited to them alone, but as having reference to his Church, 'even unto the end of the world;' since it is certain He designed his Church not to cease with the lives of its first founders, but to continue permanently.

Miraculous gifts, not perpetuated.

We may, perhaps, think that, if matters had been left to our judgment and disposal, we should have asked for a continuance of miracles for the conversion of unbelievers, and a continued inspiration in the church, in order to be sure of an infallible interpretation of Scripture. But as there is no promise of anything of this kind, we have no right,

either to conclude, from our own wishes, that it must exist, or again, to reject Christianity for not completely answering our wishes.

It is quite otherwise, however, with those things we have been speaking of as essential requisites for a Society. We infer that a Christian-church must have them, not because this is *advantageous* and desirable, but because it is *indispensable* to every kind of Society. Without Officers and Rules of some kind or other, and power of enrolling and excluding Members, no Society could subsist at all. And since our Great Master did sanction the existence of Christian-societies, we fairly conclude that, by so doing, He sanctioned whatever is essential to the existence of a Society, and implied thereby.

Christian churches under the rule of fallible men.

Such was manifestly the will of the Divine Founder of our religion. And it was also his will that Christian communities—the several portions of his kingdom—should continue to subsist under the government of *uninspired* fallible men, having no miraculous powers, nor any infallible guide on earth to appeal to in case of any doubt as to the right interpretation of Scripture, or the right application of Scripture-principles.

§ 8.

Difference between the first age of Christianity and ours.

This may seem to some persons very strange. Not but that we can perceive plainly that there is a *difference* between our case and that of those who lived when the Gospel was first

preached [proclaimed.] For in order to *introduce* a revelation from Heaven, it was indispensably necessary that certain persons should receive from Heaven a communication of what that revelation was. And no one could have been expected to listen to them, if they had not proved, by the display of miraculous powers, that they really had received such a communication. In aftertimes, on the contrary, the *writings* of those persons may be referred to for a knowledge of what the religion is. And the miracles by which *they* established it, and without which it never *could* have been established, may be appealed to in proof of its divine origin.

Miraculous gifts withdrawn.

But still, if it were left to each Christian's judgment and choice, whether he would or would not have inspiration and other miraculous gifts bestowed on the Church, for the conversion of unbelievers, and for the satisfaction of the doubting, and for the correction of such errors as arise from time to time,—if each man were left to decide on this according to his own judgment and wishes—it is probable that very many would ask for a restoration of those gifts. We should not at least find all Christians agreeing to decline them as no longer needed.

Many there are who would fain have—somewhere at least on earth—an infallible guide, accessible to all men, to decide, by evident divine authority, on any questions that may arise. And some there are who are even so bent on this, that they resolve to find it—because they deem it needful—with, or without

good reasons for believing it to exist; and who will accept the Gospel on no other condition.

Duty of Christians when left without miraculous gifts.

But no such choice—no such offer—is before us. What is required of us is, thankfully to endeavour to make the best use of the advantages we *have*, instead of conjecturing or wondering why it is that we have not more. We are not called on to explain to the satisfaction of all men, or of ourselves, the reasons, in each instance, for God's having dealt with us as He has. What we are to say, in reference to any such inquiries, is 'Even so, Father! for *so it seemed good* in *Thy sight*.'

§ 9.

The Apostles not succeeded in the apostolical office.

To Him, then, it seemed good that after the departure of the Apostles, no successors to them in the Apostolic office should arise. As *members* indeed, and as *ministers and rulers* of Christian churches, they were succeeded by others, down to this day. But *as Apostles of Jesus Christ*, they have no successors. As personal attendants on Him, and eye-witnesses of his *resurrection*—as both possessors and *dispensers* of *miraculous* gifts,* and as *inspired oracles* to make known the Divine will,—in all these points, which were what constituted the Apostolic-office, they left none to succeed them. In all that relates to Christian-churches, and also in that for the sake of which Churches were instituted, the conduct

* Acts, viii. 14.

of individual Christians in *all* the concerns of life,—men are, now, by the decree of Providence, left to act (according to their own best discretion) in conformity with Gospel-*principles*, as recorded in Scripture.

What spiritual aid is promised.

The Holy Spirit, indeed, 'who helpeth our infirmities,' is promised to those who earnestly seek it, and who strive to profit by it. This aid is needed by us, and is promised to us, both for the establishment of our *faith*, and also for the guidance of our judgment, and of our *conduct*, whether in matters connected with the Church, or in anything else. But how far any one is really 'led by the Spirit' in each instance, there is no authority on earth to decide. It is the office of that Spirit to guard us both from *error* and from *sin*. But we must not pretend to be either free from sin, or exempt from error, since of *that* we cannot be infallible judges. If it be right to say, 'Who can tell how oft he offendeth?' we ought to add also, 'Who can tell how oft he mistaketh?'

§ 10.

Duties of Rulers of a Christian Church.

A Christian Church, then, being a Society, instituted under Christ's sanction, for the purpose of keeping up and extending the knowledge and practice of his religion, and thus making men faithful and obedient subjects of his kingdom, the rulers of such a Society are bound to act, according to the best of their power, with a view to this object.

They are to keep in mind, that is, that it is *Christ's* kingdom and not their *own* in which they hold office. 'We preach not ourselves,' says the Apostle, 'but Christ Jesus our Lord; and us, your servants for Christ's sake.'

The powers, therefore, which He has entrusted to a Church are to be exercised in strict conformity with the principles laid down by Him and his inspired servants.

A Church must teach Scripture-doctrine.

No Church has power to alter, or to add to, the terms of Gospel-salvation as laid down in Scripture; or to keep back from its members anything revealed in Scripture; or to encourage, or willingly leave them, in ignorance of it. For its very office is, in the words of Christ Himself, to 'teach them to observe *all* things whatsoever I have commanded.'

Catechisms, &c.

It is, indeed, allowable, and proper, that a Church should employ, for the instruction of its people, convenient Summaries and Expositions of Scripture doctrine, such as catechisms, &c. For this is to supply an omission, which (as was observed above) was purposely left in Scripture. But then, these catechisms, &c., must contain the very doctrines of Scripture, and none other. And being the compositions of uninspired men, no authority must be claimed for them, except from their agreement with Scripture. And the same rule applies to forms of prayer and to creeds.

Creeds.

Creeds, which have been sometimes called 'Symbols', sometimes 'Confessions of Faith,' or 'Articles of Religion,' are statements of such doctrines as must be acknowledged by any one who would become, or remain, a member of the Church which adopts that creed. In different Churches, in the earliest times of Christianity, different creeds were in use; and alterations were made in them from time to time. Not that any Church had a right to alter the Christian Faith; but that it was necessary to meet, and guard against the particular religious errors which arose in various ages and countries. But as none of these creeds is to be found in Scripture, so, there is none that can claim any authority, except from its conformity to Scripture.

§ 11.

Church ordinances.

The *doctrines*, then, which a Christian Church teaches, and is bound to teach, are to be those of the Christian Scriptures; neither more nor less.

But on the other hand, Church-*ordinances* and *regulations* are only required to be not *at variance* with Scripture. For it is indispensably necessary for a Church to make enactments on many points (as was observed above) respecting which nothing is precisely laid down in Scripture; but only the general principle, 'let all things be done to edifying.'

For instance, assembling for public joint worship is enjoined in Scripture; but the times, places, and mode of conducting the Worship are not specified.

The Sacraments, again, as instituted by Christ, are to be celebrated; but (as was remarked in the preceding Lesson) the mode of celebration is not prescribed. It is not even ordered that the Elders [Clergy] are to administer the Sacraments: though this (very naturally and properly), has been the rule of every Church.

Necessity of Church-regulations.

In these, and in several other such points, a Church is not only authorised, but compelled, to make regulations; because we are enjoined to do things which *must* be done in *some* regular specified mode, and the mode is not laid down in Scripture.

For instance, since Christians are commanded (as has been just observed) to *assemble** for divine worship, it is necessary that the times for doing so should be fixed by authority. And, accordingly, certain days have been, in all ages of Christianity, set apart by every Church, for this purpose. What is called Christmas-day has been set apart to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ; the day called Good-Friday, for his crucifixion; and Easter-day in each year, and also the first day of each week (thence called the 'Lord's-day') to celebrate his resurrection.†

* Heb. x. 25.

† Hence, the Sunday, being (like the Jewish Sabbath) one day in every seven, is sometimes called the Christian-Sabbath; though kept on a different day of the week from the Jewish Sabbath, and in a different manner, and to commemorate a different event.

Neither the fourth Commandment, nor any other law enjoining the observance of the seventh day of the week in memory of the close of the creation, is regarded by Christians as binding on them. For if it were, they would be bound strictly to obey it, as it was given. For the Apostles -who, themselves, as Jews, kept the Sabbath-day, and also, as Christians, assembled for worship on the

The Lord's-day.

And in the observance of 'the Lord's-day,' after the example of the Apostles (though no express command of theirs to that effect is recorded), all Churches, from the earliest times, have, very properly, agreed.* A Church that should act otherwise, would be *making an ill use* of the powers bestowed on it. But it would be presumptuously *exceeding* its powers, if it should dare to enact anything at variance with Scripture. For instance, either, on the one hand, to abolish the Sacraments ordained by Christ, or, on the other hand, to depart from that celebration of the Lord's Supper which He Himself appointed, and to administer the bread without the cup, which He directed *all* the Disciples to drink of, is what no Church can have any right to do.

Sacraments.

§ 12.

Christian Priests.

And it would be equally against Scripture, and that in a most important point, to attempt to convert Christian Ministers [Elders] into *sacrificing* [sacerdotal] Priests: because Scripture plainly teaches that, under the Gospel, this office belongs to Christ alone.

Lord's Day—never made a *change* of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first. And no Church, consisting of uninspired men, has any right to change any divine ordinance designed for them. But the Mosaic Law having come to an end, and moreover having never been binding on Gentiles, a Christian Church is left to determine what days shall be set apart, as above mentioned.

* See 'Thoughts on the Sabbath.'

But Christian Ministers for the performance of such duties as are described in Paul's Epistles to Timothy and to Titus, and elsewhere, every Church clearly has a right to appoint, for the reasons above given. And there is no reason to doubt that the Elders ordained in each Church by Paul, or any other Apostle, did themselves, in turn, ordain others to assist or to succeed them; and these again, others; and so on in perpetuity, down to the present day.

Authority of Christian Ministers derived from the Church.

But then, it is from the Church that Ministers (as well as Church-ordinances) derive all their authority. Whether in sending fresh labourers into the Lord's vineyard, or in any of their other functions, they must act as *authorised* by the Society, and as representing it; not as possessing independent powers, as individuals. For it is to a Church as to a Society that those rights we have been speaking of belong; and whatever is done by the regular Officers of a Society, conformably to its constitution, is to be considered as done by the Society.

Power of ordaining.

When, therefore, Bishops, or any others, are spoken of as *ordaining* persons to the Ministry, it must be understood that, being empowered by their Church so to do, according to the rules of that Church, they are its *representatives*, and their acts are its acts.

And if any Minister were regularly deprived of his office, he would no longer have any power either to ordain, or in any way to officiate; unless he were

admitted into some other Church, and taken into its service as one of its Ministers.

§ 13.

Apostolical Succession.

The rights, then, conferred on Christian Communities by our divine Master Himself, being such as have been described, no one need be distressed by doubts and fears respecting some possible irregularity in the ordination of some Minister, which may possibly have taken place at some time or other, in the course of eighteen centuries.

Amidst the wars and tumults and general confusion which took place at various times during that space, and especially during what are called 'the dark ages,' when ignorance and barbarism, as well as lawless violence, were so prevalent, it may have happened, more than once, that some person who had never been regularly ordained, or, perhaps, even baptized, may have contrived to intrude himself into the ministerial office; and to have even attained the rank of a Bishop; and may thus have been the ordainer of others, the successors of whom may possibly be among ourselves at this day.

There is no Christian Minister now existing that can trace up, with complete certainty, his own ordination, through perfectly regular steps, to the times of the Apostles. And, accordingly, if the reality of the ministerial Office were made to depend, not on a man's being an acknowledged Minister of a Christian Church, but on a certain mysterious sacramental

virtue, transmitted, from hand to hand, in unbroken succession from the Apostles, there would be a most distressing and incurable uncertainty in each Christian's mind, whether he were really baptized, really ordained, or really partaker of any Christian privileges.

The recognised Ministers of a Church are Christian Ministers.

But as it is, there is no ground for any such perplexing doubts. A Christian Community, formed on Gospel principles, confers on its recognised Officers the rights of Christian Ministers; who are to be regarded as having Christ's commission, and as successors of the Apostles in the ministerial office. We are bound, indeed, to do our very best to prevent irregularities of any kind, in ordinations, and in everything else connected with our religion. But we need not fear that any accidental or unavoidable irregularity that may ever have occurred, can have the effect of shutting out whole Bodies of sincere disciples from the Gospel-covenant and Christian ordinances, or from any privilege granted by Christ Himself to those who should be 'gathered together in his name.'

§ 14.

A Christian Ministry may be traced up to the first age.

It is to be observed, however, that although no *one individual Christian Minister* can, with complete certainty, trace his own succession in an unbroken chain from the Apostles, and prove that there was no flaw in any link, the

case is different when we look to *the Clergy* generally. For there can be no reasonable doubt that *such an Order of men* did always exist, from the times of the Apostles, continuously, to this day. We may be as sure of this as we are that great numbers of the English nation are descendants of the Saxons, who settled in Britain in the 5th and 6th centuries, though there is probably no one man who could trace his descent from any of them. For Christian Ministers held office in the Churches as immediate successors of others who held the same office, and who, in like manner, professed to be the immediate successors of others, &c., whose predecessors had been appointed by the Apostles themselves.

The Christian Ministry a monument of the Christian miracles.

Now if, a century ago, or ten centuries ago, or at any other time, a number of men had arisen, claiming to be the immediate successors (as above described) of persons holding this office, when, in fact, *no such Order of men had ever been heard of*, such a silly pretension would have been immediately exposed and derided.

There must always, therefore, have existed such an Order of men, from the time of those Apostles who professed to be eye-witnesses of the Resurrection, and to work sensible public miracles in proof of their divine commission. And consequently the Christian Ministry is a standing *monument* to attest the *public proclamation* of those miraculous events at the very time when they are said to have occurred.

Now at that time there must have been great numbers of persons able and willing to expose the imposture, had there been any.

The mode of ordaining not essential to the argument.

And you are to observe that this argument for the truth of the Sacred History is quite independent of any particular *mode* of appointing Christian Ministers. If, for instance, these had been always elected by the People, and had at once entered on their office without any ordination by other Ministers, still, if they were but appointed (in whatever mode) as immediate successors of persons holding the same office, the argument is the same.

That mode, indeed, of admitting men into the Ministry which was practised by the Apostles,* has, in fact, been retained in all ages of Christianity. But the argument we have been now considering is quite independent of this. It turns entirely on the mere fact of the *constant existence* of a certain Order of men.

The observance of the Lord's-day a monument of the Resurrection.

And it is worth observing, that the LORD'S-DAY is a monument of the same kind. It is kept all over the world, by different and even hostile bodies of Christians, in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. And not only so,—for this alone would not be a decisive proof,—but it is observed by them as a day which has been *always* thus kept, from the very day

* 1 Tim. iv. 14, and v. 22.

when the Lord Jesus is recorded to have risen, and to have appeared to his Disciples. Now, if it had *not* been thus constantly kept, from the first, but the observance of it introduced in some later age, those among whom it was thus introduced would have been able to testify that they had never heard of such a festival before.

Hymn of Prayer referred to in § 3.

Thou to whom all power is given,
Here on earth, above in heaven;
Jesus, Saviour, mighty Lord,
Be thy holy name adored.

In all our hearts all-sovereign reign:
All the world be thy domain!
May redeemed man, we pray Thee
Like th' angelic hosts obey Thee!

Thou who dost the ravens feed,
Grant us all our bodies need;
Thou in whom we move and live,
Daily grace sustaining give.

Pardon us, our sins confessing,
Keep us from afresh transgressing,
May *we* pardon one another,
As becomes a sinning brother.

In temptation's dreadful hour,
Shield us with thy gracious power:
From Satan's wiles our hearts defend,
Saviour, Comforter, and Friend!

Glory to thee on earth be given,
Christ our King, the Lord of Heaven!
Glory to thee, Great First and Last,
When this world, and time, are past! *

* It is not at all intended that the above, or any similar Form of Prayer, should *supersede* the Lord's Prayer as commonly used, or

Books chiefly employed in the compilation of the above Lesson :—

The Synagogue and the Church ; being an attempt to show that the Government, Ministers, and Services of the Church were derived from those of the Synagogue. Condensed from the Latin of Vitringa. By Joshua L. Bernard, A.M. 8vo. London : B. Fellowes, Ludgate-street.

History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity. By the Rev. Dr. Hinds, 2 vols., 8vo. London : B. Fellowes, Ludgate-street.

The Kingdom of Christ Delineated, in Two Essays on our Lord's own Account of His Person, and of the Nature of His Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers, and Ministry of a Christian Church as appointed by Himself. By Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Fourth edition, 8vo. London : John W. Parker, West Strand. See Lesson II.

Thoughts on the Sabbath ; to which is subjoined, an Address to the Inhabitants of Dublin on the Observance of the Lord's Day. By the same. Third edition.

Christ the only Priest under the Gospel. Sermon V. Published with the Bampton Lectures for 1822. 'The Use and Abuse of Party Feeling in matters of Religion.' By the same. Third edition.

On the Omission of a System of Articles of Faith, Liturgies, and Ecclesiastical Canons. Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. By the same. Fifth edition, Essay VI. See Lesson II.

The Churchman's Theological Dictionary. By the Rev. Robert Eden, M.A., F.S.A. ; late Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Second edition. London : John W. Parker, West Strand.

Reserve in the Teaching of Religion ; a Discourse delivered in the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, at an Ordination held by his Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin. With an Appendix. By John West, D.D., Vicar of St. Anne's, and Chaplain to the Archbishop of Dublin. Dublin : Curry and Co.

Short Method with the Deists. Vol. I. of the Theological Works of the Rev. Charles Leslie. New edition. Seven vols. 8vo. Oxford : J. H. Parker.

those others in use in most Churches, in which the name of Jesus is introduced in a different manner. But the form of address adopted here (as well as in the well-known prayer of Chrysostom, and in some others,) is authorized by Apostolic example, as *one* mode of complying with our Saviour's direction.

PART II.

FROM THE APOSTOLIC AGE, DOWNWARDS

LESSON VI.

CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.—PART I.

§ 1.

No perpetual inspiration in the Church.

It was observed in the preceding Lesson, that if all things relating to the Christian Church had been ordered by Divine Providence in the way that *men* would have been likely to conjecture as the most probable, and to wish for as the most desirable, there would have been some infallible guide left on Earth, to decide all questions that might arise, and to guard us against all possible religious error. There would have been a perpetual inspiration lodged in some person or persons indued with such manifest *miraculous* powers as could leave no doubt as to their inspiration. And these persons would have been universally *accessible*, that is, easily to be consulted by any one who might need being directed in his faith or in his conduct.

But it is notorious that such was *not* the design of Providence; and that no such guide does exist. Of all the persons who have claimed infallibility, there is none who has displayed (as Paul did) 'the signs of an Apostle;' that is, such palpable and

undeniable miraculous powers as to leave no doubt in any candid mind of his being really inspired. And since the very purpose for which an infallible guide is supposed to be needed, is, the removal of all reasonable *doubts*, it is plain that if God had thought fit to provide us with such a guide, He would not have left it at all *doubtful* where we were to look for that guide.

It seems to have been his design that part of Man's trial on Earth should consist in his being required to 'prove [that is, try and examine] all things, and hold fast that which is right.' We are called on to inquire carefully, and humbly, and piously, after truth; and to embrace whatever appears, to the best of our judgment, to be the truth.

§ 2.

Danger of error even in the Apostolic Age.

But still, if no errors or dissensions had arisen in the Church during the days of the Apostles, and then, when these inspired teachers were removed, heresies and schisms [divisions] had arisen, for the first time, we might have felt as if God had forsaken us, and as if Christians were exposed to such trials as had not been originally designed. Or, we might have imagined (as indeed some persons *have* imagined) that God would *still* grant us inspiration, attested by miraculous signs, if we were not wanting in faith and in earnest supplication for such gifts.

And accordingly in almost every Age of Christi-

anity there have been persons who have persuaded themselves that miraculous powers and inspiration actually are bestowed on themselves or on their Church. And these pretensions are believed by such as decide according to their own wishes and conjectures, without any rational proofs.

But when we come to examine Scripture History, we find that, even in the times of the Apostles, false teachers did 'arise, speaking perverse things [perverted doctrines], to draw away disciples after them' (Acts, xx. 28), and that Christians were thus divided into rival sects. And this, the Apostles teach us, is a part of the appointed trial to which we are to be subjected here on earth. 'There must needs be heresies, that they which are approved may be made manifest;'* that is, that men may have to exercise their care and candour in choosing between truth and error.

And since God did think fit that Christians should have to encounter such trials, He mercifully provided that they should be forewarned to 'take heed to themselves.' The errors and corruptions introduced, even in the days of the Apostles, are recorded in our Sacred Books, on purpose, no doubt, to put us on our guard; to prepare us to be watchful against corruptions of Christianity in all other Ages of the Church; and also to prevent our being disheartened at finding ourselves exposed to such a trial.

* 1 Cor. xi. 19.

§ 3.

Sources of corruptions of Christianity.

It would, of course, be quite unsuitable to such a work as this to give an account of each of the various corruptions of Christianity which have taken place in different Ages and Countries. It will be sufficient to give a sketch of the principal *sources* from which they arose, and of the *means* by which, in many instances, they were encouraged and kept up.

These two general rules, then, are to be kept in mind:

1st. That whatever *opposed* Christianity at the outset, afterwards tended to *mix* itself up with the Religion, and corrupt it.

2ndly. That as far as any corruptions depended on *local* and *temporary* circumstances, so far, they would be likely soon to die away, without spreading widely: but so far as they were connected with *human nature*, we may expect to find them appearing again and again in various Countries.

What first opposed, and afterwards corrupted Christianity.

(1.) First, then, we have said that the causes which, at the beginning, led to open hostility against the Gospel, afterwards operated to corrupt it. All those human faults and follies—all those prejudices and infirmities and vices—which originally disposed men to reject the Christian Religion, found their way *into* it, in proportion as it prevailed.

At first, almost all those whose notions and whose dispositions were wholly adverse to Christianity, rejected it altogether, and endeavoured to put it down: though even from the very first there were exceptions to this rule; as we see in the instances of Iscariot, and of Simon the Sorcerer. But as the Religion spread, and became less and less unpopular, and the number of disciples multiplied more and more, there was a continually increasing number of persons who, though members of Christian Churches, had not fully understood the character of the Gospel, nor imbibed the spirit of it. And these introduced *into* the Religion the same kind of errors and wrong principles as had originally been openly arrayed *against* it.

Sources of opposition to the Gospel.

The chief opposition to the Gospel arose from—i. Judaism; ii. Pagan Superstitions; iii. Heathen Philosophy; iv. Immorality of Character; and v. Worldly Policy.

And the spirit of Judaism, of Paganism, &c., &c., afterwards found their way *into* Christianity, and tended to corrupt it.

§ 4.

Opposition of Judaism to Christianity.

[i.] It has been pointed out in the former Lessons how much opposed the prevailing Jewish notions and prejudices were to the Religion of Jesus Christ. (Lesson IV. § 12.)

And accordingly, one of the very earliest attempts

to corrupt Christianity was made by the Judaizing teachers, who were continually endeavouring (as you may see in Acts xv., in the Epistle to the Galatians, ch. ii., and in ch. iii., of the Epistle to the Philippians), to bring the Gentile believers under the yoke of the Mosaic Law.

Opposition of Paganism to Christianity.

[ii.] Then again of the opposition of the Pagan worshippers to the Gospel, we find many instances mentioned in the Book of the Acts, (especially in ch. xvi. 20, 21, and xix. 27.)

And we find from time to time attempts made to incorporate into Christianity superstitions borrowed from Paganism, or of a like nature.

The earliest, perhaps, of these corruptions of Christianity was that introduced by those very ancient heretics the Gnostics, whom the Apostle John was particularly occupied in opposing, both in his Epistles and in the opening of his Gospel.

These men blended with Christian doctrines many of the notions of the Pagans, of the Persian, and some other Eastern Nations. The religious system of these nations consisted in acknowledging and reverencing two Beings of equal power,—a good and an evil god—whom they called Ormuzd and Ahriman. And some of their descendants, in the same regions, at this day, are said to retain this faith, and to be worshippers principally of the evil god.

The Gnostics accordingly taught, among other things, that the world was not created by the Supreme God, but by an Evil Being, or by a certain inferior god.

But, as has been above said, various other Pagan errors, or errors resembling those of Paganism, have from time to time crept into the Christian Church.

[iii.] The ancient heathen Philosophers again, who believed little or nothing of the popular superstitions, were no less opposed to the Gospel, which they derided as 'foolishness.' And many of them, when they afterwards embraced Christianity, endeavoured to reconcile it with their philosophical speculations, and thus to be wise 'above that which is written.'

Opposition of heathen philosophy.

It is evidently to this danger that Paul is alluding in many passages; especially when he warns the Colossians (ii. 8)—'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' (See also 1 Cor. i. 20—28.)

It appears, therefore, that even in the Apostolic Age men had begun to introduce into Christianity presumptuous speculations on matters not revealed in Scripture, and to make the gospel a field for the exercise of their philosophical ingenuity. But in later ages this evil prevailed to a far greater degree.

§ 5.

[iv.] As for moral depravity, no one can doubt how much this must have led many persons to shut their ears against the evidences for a religion which required them to reform their lives. The description given of Felix the

Opposition to Christianity from moral depravity.

Governor would, no doubt, have suited a great number of others: 'When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix trembled, and said, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.'

But when persons of this character did become members of the Church, as it appears many did, even in the times of the Apostles, they naturally sought to accommodate the Religion to their own corrupt characters.

This seems to have been most particularly the case with those Gnostics above mentioned. For they taught that men are to be saved by what they called 'knowledge* of the Gospel,' while living the most immoral life, and yet having no sin (that is, nothing imputed to *them* as sin), but being accounted righteous without 'doing righteousness.' (See 1 John, ch. iii.) And this it was that made the Apostle John so vehement in his censure of them.

But there are many allusions in the Apostolic Epistles, to others besides these Gnostics, who sought to 'hold the truth in unrighteousness.' (Rom. i. 18)

Worldly policy opposed to Christianity.

[v.] Lastly, *worldly policy* was evidently one of the chief causes which, in the outset, acted as a hindrance to the reception of Christianity. It is plain, from the very nature of the case, that all views of worldly ambition,—all desire of worldly profit or

* Hence their title of 'Gnostics,' that is, persons *knowing* the Gospel.

advantage of any kind,—all considerations of supposed political expediency,—must have been, at first, arrayed in opposition to the Gospel. And every part of the sacred narrative confirms this. We find the Jewish Rulers influenced by the fear that 'the Romans would come and take away their place and nation.' (John, xi. 48.) We find them urging before Pilate, that 'whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar.' And we find the same sort of plea repeatedly used to the Roman governors, and often with effect. (See Acts, xvii. 7; and xix. 23.)

And again, the poverty, hardships, and persecutions which the early Christians had been so earnestly forewarned of by our Lord (John, xvi. 1, 2), and to which they were actually exposed, must have operated very strongly in prejudicing all men of a worldly character against the religion

Of course, in proportion as Christianity became less unpopular, and more generally received, this cause would less and less operate in making men *reject* the religion, and would be more and more likely to *corrupt* it. In proportion as worldly-minded men became members of the Church, they would naturally endeavour to wrest the Religion to their own views of ambition or of profit.

This could not be expected to take place to the same extent in the earliest Ages as afterwards. Yet we find that, even in the days of the Apostles, men had crept into the church who were tainted with avarice or worldly ambition, and who corrupted the Christian doctrines so as to favour their own views.

For we find Paul cautioning Timothy against 'perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who regard Religion as a source of profit.'* (1 Tim. vi. 5.)

Dangers to Christianity from within.

All the principal causes, then, which occasioned *opposition* to Christianity, at the outset, led afterwards to the *corruption* of the Religion. And accordingly some of the principal corruptions which have, at various times, been introduced, will be noticed (in this and in the next Lesson), under the same five heads under which we have, just above, treated of the sources of the original opposition to the Gospel. Those causes, which had begun to operate even in the days of the Apostles, had, of course, more of this corrupting influence in later times. In proportion as the dangers to the Church from *without* were diminished, by the increasing prevalence of the Religion, the dangers from *within* naturally increased. For, the number must of course have become greater, of members of the Church who were such merely because they had been brought up as children of Christian parents, or because Christianity was the prevailing Religion; and who *would* have rejected it when first preached, from their having an unconverted heart, and being strangers to the true spirit of the Gospel. And such persons will always be likely to aim at bringing their religion into a conformity with their own characters

* This is the correct translation of the Original.

instead of conforming their own characters to the Religion.

§ 6.

Temporary and permanent corruptions.

The second general rule we laid down was, that so far as any human fault or folly was peculiar to some *particular time or Country*, its effects may be expected soon to have passed away without spreading very far; but so far as it belonged to *human nature* in general, we must expect to find the evil effects of it reappearing again and again, in various forms, in all Ages, and in various regions.

And for the most part it will be found that the prejudices and evil dispositions of men which have introduced religious error, and accordingly the religious errors themselves thence arising, are different in their *outward form* according to the peculiar circumstances of each time and place, but that in *substance* and at bottom, they are nearly alike, always and everywhere.

For example—the prejudice of the Jews in favour of their own nation and institutions, gave rise to that very early heresy above noticed (see Acts, xv. and Gal. ii.) of those who taught that all Christians were bound to keep the Mosaic Law; or at least that such as did so had attained a superior degree of sanctity. The violation of the UNITY [ONENESS] of Christ's Religion, by thus dividing Christians into different classes, admitted to different degrees of religious privilege, was noticed in Lesson IV.

The sect of Judaising Christians, however, thus founded seems not to have lasted long. The destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple seems to have soon put an end to it.* But the *general* tendency towards this violation of Christian Unity, being not peculiar to the Jews, but a part of human nature, has shown itself (as was pointed out in Lesson IV.) again and again, under different forms, in various portions of the Church.

Monastic Orders.

What are called the 'Monastic Orders,' which have long existed in many Churches, are a striking instance of this. Though the great mass of Christians have been solemnly dedicated to Christ at baptism, wherein they engage to be his 'faithful soldiers and servants,' yet many have thought fit to take on themselves a new and distinct engagement, not binding on Christians generally, but only on such as have professed this new and superior kind of Christianity. The members of such orders are often called the 'religious;' and there is one order called the 'Society of Jesus;' as if the Church itself were not the *Society of Jesus*, and all its members bound to be *religious*. And the members of these Orders are supposed to possess a certain extraordinary kind of holiness, from their imposing on themselves certain restrictions, and privations, and other sufferings, according to rules laid down, not by Scripture for all men, but by particular founders,

* See Lesson XVI., on Evidences.

for their own Order. Now this is clearly in violation of the ONENESS of Christ's religion.

Evangelical Christians.

Again; one may find persons (as was remarked in the fourth Lesson) dividing Christians into 'Elect' and not-Elect —those who are, and those who are not 'God's People:' accounting some Christians 'Saints,' and others not; some 'Evangelical,' and others not; though 'Saints' was the very termed used by the Apostles to denote what we call 'Christians;'* and though it is plain that since *Christianity* is the Religion of the '*Gospel*' [Evangelium], all doctrines and all persons must be *Evangelical* or not, exactly in the same sense, and in the same degree, that they are, or are not *Christian*.†

Those also who regard Christian Ministers as *sacerdotal* [sacrificing] Priests, acting as a kind of *mediators* between God and the people, are evidently going very far towards such a distinction between Clergy and Laity as is at variance with the apostolical view of Christian-Unity.

§ 7.

Communicants and non-Communicants.

And it may be added, that there is a considerable number of persons who make a division of Christians into the two classes of Communicants and Non-Communicants. For there

* See Discourse on 'Christian Saints.'

† There are, indeed, some persons who confine both the terms 'Christian' and 'Evangelical' to those who exactly agree with them in all points, and belong to their Party; regarding all others as excluded from the Gospel-covenant. But there are again some who make the distinction above alluded to. See 'Thoughts on the proposed Evangelical Alliance.'

are very many of these latter, who, though far from disregarding Christian duty altogether, or absenting themselves from public worship, yet, consider, that,—so far from being a duty—it would be a *wrong* thing for *them* to attend the Lord's Table, unless they were determined to become Saints in some peculiar manner, different from what is expected of Christians generally. And this they think it would be presumptuous for *them* to pretend to. They regard themselves, in short, as an *inferior class* of Christians.

Pagan division into initiated and non-initiated.

And it is to be observed that the division of worshippers into different classes in respect of religious privileges, belonged, even much more, to the Pagan religions than to the Jewish. For among the Pagans, certain persons were 'initiated' (as it was called) into such 'Mysteries' of their religion as were carefully kept *secret* from the vulgar. And this was not the case with the Mosaic religion.*

The division, therefore, of Christians into such classes, is what the heathen converts, no less than the Jewish, would be inclined to. And it is, moreover, something so natural to man, that, in one shape or another, it has appeared in almost all parts and Ages of the Church.

And so it is with most of the other corruptions of Christianity. The particular *form* in which each

* Josephus remarks, as a distinction between the Pagan and the Jewish religions, that this latter made known to all the People the mysteries of their religion; while the Pagans concealed from all but those specially 'initiated' the mysteries of theirs.

has appeared, will have generally been determined by *local* and *temporary* circumstances; and when these circumstances are changed, that particular corruption will die away, to re-appear (so far as it pertains to the character of the 'natural man') under some new shapes, in various Countries.

§ 8.

Judaizing errors the most lasting.

It is to be observed, however, that those corruptions of Christianity which arise from the mixing up of Judaism with it, are, for one reason, likely to be more lasting than most others, and to be oftener revived. Christians acknowledge that the Mosaic dispensation came from God. And that, and also the Christian dispensation, are contained in the volume which we call the Bible. Now any one who regards the Bible (which many Christians do) as *one book*, containing divine instructions, without having formed any clear notions of what does and does not belong to each dispensation, will, of course, fall into the greatest confusion of thought. He will be like a man who should have received from his father, at various times, a great number of letters containing directions as to his conduct, from the time when he was a little child just able to read, till he was a grown man; and who should lay by these letters with care and reverence, but in a confused heap, and should take up any one of them at random, and read it without any reference to its *date*, whenever he needed his father's instructions how to act.

For, the Bible corresponds very much to such a collection of letters from a father to a son. (See Lessons I., III., and IV.)

Accordingly, many erroneous notions, wholly or partly drawn from Judaism, have again and again found their way into the Christian Church.

Millenarian views.

For example—there have been in almost all Ages of the Church, persons who have taught that Jesus Christ is to come upon earth and reign in great worldly splendour at Jerusalem for a thousand years: which period is thence called Millennium.* And superior privileges, as God's peculiar people, are then to be restored (according to this doctrine) to the Jews; that is, to such Jews as shall have continued *unbelievers*; not, to the descendants of those great multitudes† of them who embraced Christianity in the days of the Apostles, and since, and who thereupon soon became blended with the Gentile Christians. But the remnant of the Jews who shall have obstinately rejected the Gospel up to that time, are then to be restored to their own land, and to have a superiority in God's sight over men of Gentile race. And the Temple at Jerusalem is to be restored, and to be again the place of peculiar holiness, whither all men are to resort to worship.

Now these expectations of a Christ who is to be a great and victorious temporal king, and of a kingdom of earthly glory, and of the restoration of the

* From 'Mille Anni,' 1000 years.
† Lesson XVI., on Evidences.

Temple, and of the exaltation of the Jews above all other people, are precisely those which the Jewish nation were so wedded to when our Lord came, and which led most of them to reject Him.*

There are several other religious errors which have arisen from the same cause—the practice of confusedly blending together the Law and the Gospel. Thus, some persons (noticed in Lessons III. and IV.) represent temporal rewards and punishments as a part of the sanction of the Christian dispensation; and again, future rewards and punishments as a part of the sanction of the Mosaic. And this (as was there remarked), destroys all clear notions of either system, and leads to great and dangerous practical errors, besides exposing our Scriptures to unanswerable objections from infidels.

§ 9.

Sacrificing Priests introduced into Christianity.

And again, the introduction into Christianity of sacrificing [sacerdotal] Priests, Altars, Sacrifices, and Temples (which was noticed in Lesson IV. as utterly contrary to the whole character of the Gospel) may be traced both to Judaism and to Paganism. For all these things were common to them both; though the Jewish priests offered sacrifices to the true God, and the Pagan priests to idols.

This is one of the worst corruptions of Christianity, and of the most widely spread. But it is worth

* See 'Revelations of a Future State:' Lecture on the Millennium.

remarking how strong an evidence it affords of the divine origin of the Religion itself. No such thing had ever been heard of, or thought of, as a religion without *Priests*, offering, in behalf of the people, *sacrifices* on *Altars*; and almost all the ancient religions had also *Temples*. And, moreover, so strong is the partiality in human nature for these things, that they have been again and again introduced into Christianity (quite against the spirit of it) from very early times, in most parts of the world. The Religion, therefore, which the Apostles preached, was one wholly at variance, in a most important point, with all existing religions, and especially with that which *they* had been brought up in: and at variance also with all the notions and inclinations of all mankind.

Corruption of Christianity an evidence.

Now any man of common sense, who duly reflects on the subject, must be convinced that it is *utterly impossible* these men should have *devised such a Religion* in their own imaginations; and, again, that they should, without miraculous proofs, have induced such multitudes, both of Jews and Gentiles, to embrace it.

§ 10.

Pagan worship of ceased men.

There is another point in which superstitions very much like those of the Pagans, have corrupted the worship of many Christians. It was remarked in Lesson II. that many of the

pagan gods were deceased MEN, whom they had deified on account of some supposed extraordinary excellence of character, and eminent services to mankind or to their countrymen. Such were Romulus, the founder of Rome (who was worshipped under the name of Quirinus), and Hercules, and Theseus, and a multitude of others.

Some of these they worshipped as gods; others under the title of demi-gods [half-gods], or heroes. Any man whom his countrymen had been accustomed to venerate very highly in his lifetime, they naturally, first *wished*, and then *hoped*, and lastly *believed*, might be elevated after death to such an exalted state as to enable him to hear them, and to do them services, either by himself, or by making applications on their behalf to some superior god. And, just as persons in humble life generally apply to a king or other great man, not directly, but through his ministers and other attendants, so, a large portion of the pagan worship was addressed to some whom they accounted inferior gods.

But, moreover, they supposed each of these inferior gods to have a special regard for his own Country. Thus Romulus (Quirinus) was the *tutelar* [protecting] god of Rome; and Theseus, of Athens, &c. And even private families had gods of their own, who among the Romans were called 'Lares,' and 'Penates.' And the superior gods also were supposed to have partialities for particular regions or races. Thus Minerva [Pallas] was tutelar goddess of Athens; and Diana [Artemis] of Ephesus

and Juno, of Argos and Samos, &c. The *power* also of many of their gods was supposed to be limited to particular places, or to particular offices. Thus, we find the Syrians fancying that the God of Israel was the God of the *hills*, and would not be able to succour his people on the plains. And Castor and Pollux were supposed to protect sailors, &c.

And, moreover, there were particular images, and particular temples, which were supposed to have a superior sanctity above other images and temples of the same god. And again, some particular temples were resorted to by those who had need of some particular kind of service. Thus, oracles were supposed to be given by Apollo, not in every one of his temples, but only in those at Delos, and Delphi, and some others. And it was the like with respect to various other benefits sought for from several of the gods.

§ 11.

Saint worship.

Such, then, being the natural tendency of mankind, the consequence was that many Christians, though they did not introduce into the Christian Religion the worship of the *very same* gods which were worshipped by their pagan forefathers, yet fell into the same kind of superstitions. Their deep reverence for the Blessed Virgin, and for the Apostles and other eminent Christians, led them to hope, and then to believe, that these persons were able, after their departure from Earth, to hear any

one who called on them, and to make prayers of intercession for them. And the evil of this practice of invoking departed saints, was—and still is, to many Christians—disguised by their overlooking the difference between asking the prayers of the *living* and of the departed. No doubt many persons entreated (as Simon the Sorcerer did)* Peter or other Apostles to pray for them. And James expressly exhorts Christians to pray for one another (ch. i. 16). No Christian need scruple to ask any one whom he considers to be a pious and worthy man to pray for him. But when it came to be believed that a holy person, when *removed from the Earth*, can hear the addresses of thousands and millions of his votaries calling on him in all parts of the world, this belief did in fact *deify* him. Whatever subtle explanations may be attempted of the way in which 'glorified saints' are able to hear, from various regions, and repeat, more prayers every day than there are minutes in the twenty-four hours, it is plain that at least the great mass of their worshippers must regard them no less as gods than the ancient pagans did the Beings they worshipped.

The consequence was, that the chief part of the worship which is due to the 'JEALOUS GOD' came to be paid to the Virgin Mary, and those other 'saints'—amounting to several hundreds—who were, from time to time, enrolled [canonized] on the list. And thus did Christians introduce into their Religion, under new names, almost every one of the ancient

* Acts, viii.

pagan superstitions just above noticed. They knelt before *images* or pictures of the saint they invoked. They attributed peculiar holiness to some particular image, or chapel, above others dedicated to the same saint. They had patron saints (answering to the tutelar gods of the pagans), presiding over particular nations, or classes, or persons. One saint, again, was supposed to be peculiarly powerful in procuring some particular kind of relief or benefit; and another in another kind. In short, you have only to look back to what has been just said of the pagan worship, and you will see how closely it corresponds in every point (besides many more which might have been added) with the worship which has been, in some Churches, introduced into Christianity.

§ 12.

Invocation of Saints unscriptural.

And, on the other hand, if you look to the Scriptures, you will plainly see that it is not *thence* that the invocation of Saints could have been derived. They not only contain nothing to warrant it, but they seem framed purposely to guard all who are sincerely desirous of following Scripture, against this very corruption. Though we find in the Book of Acts narratives of the death of the two martyrs, Stephen, and James the Apostle, the brother of John, there is no mention of their being invoked after death. And when God saw fit to convey his commands to Cornelius, and again to Paul (Acts, x. and xxvii.) by a created Being, it is not either of these blessed martyrs, but an Angel, that is sent.

The Virgin Mary, again, is never even named throughout the Acts and Apostolic Epistles. Now this silence respecting her is utterly inconceivable, supposing it had been the practice of the early Christians to pray to her. In the Gospels, again, she is but rarely mentioned. And on three of the most remarkable occasions on which she *is* mentioned, it is apparently on purpose to discourage anything like adoration of her. At the Marriage Feast at Cana, when it appears she had been previously informed by our Lord of his intention to perform a miracle, He checks her interference (John, ii. 3, 4). And on the two other occasions, He takes pains to impress on his hearers that in his sight, the ties of kindred with Himself are as nothing in comparison of obedience to God's will.*

Any one, therefore, who carefully follows the teaching of the Evangelists and Apostles, will be preserved from such errors as we have been speaking of. But it was the disposition of 'the Natural Man' that originally led the Pagans to corrupt the Religion revealed to the earliest generations, and to 'worship the creature more than the Creator.' And that very same disposition has led many of those Christians who neglect the guidance of Scripture, to introduce like corruptions into Christianity.

* Matt. xii. 50; and Luke, xi. 27.

Books from which principally the above Lesson was compiled:—

Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church during the First Three Centuries. Translated by the Rev. H. J. Rose. Two Volumes, Octavo. London: Rivington and Co., St. Paul's Churchyard.

Index to Tracts for the Times. Vincent, Oxford.

History of the Church, from the earliest Ages to the Reformation. By George Waddington, M.A. London: Baldwin and Cradock, Paternoster Row.

The Search after Infallibility, considered in reference to the Danger of Religious Errors arising within the Church, in the Primitive as well as in all later ages. Being a Discourse delivered in the Cathedral of Christ Church, Dublin, on the occasion of the Ordination held on Sunday, the 22nd August, 1847. By Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. Second Edition, revised and enlarged. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.

A View of the Scripture Revelations concerning a Future State. (See Lesson II.) By the same.

Essays (Third Series) on the Errors of Romanism having their Origin in Human Nature. By the same.

Thoughts on the proposed Evangelical Alliance. By the same.

LESSON VII.

CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY.—PART II.

§ 1.

We have seen that many corruptions of Christianity have arisen from the mixing up with it of Judaism, or of superstitions derived from Paganism, or resembling those of the Pagans.

Corruption of Christianity by Philosophy.

[iii.] In addition to these sources of corruption, the tendency already mentioned to introduce philosophical speculations into Christianity has shown itself again and again under various forms, in all Ages of the Church, and has given rise to a multitude of heresies.

Philosophy is not at all opposed to true Religion, as long as men confine their speculations to matters which properly come within the province of Reason.*

Proper office of Reason.

But in what relates to Divine Revelations, Reason should be confined to these two points:—1st, To judge of the grounds on which any professed revelation should be received or rejected, as being 'from Heaven, or of men;' and 2ndly, To determine

* It is remarked by Locke, that those who are for laying aside the use of Reason in matters pertaining to Revelation, resemble one who should *put out his eyes* in order to make use of a *telescope*.

what it is that we are enabled and required to learn from the Revelation which God has actually given.

But not satisfied with this, men began very early to exercise their ingenuity in attempting explanations of the manner in which the divine and human nature were united in Jesus Christ—of the nature of the Trinity—of the divine Decrees—of the various Orders and Offices of Angels—and, in short, of every mystery that is partially revealed, or at all alluded to, in Scripture. These men did not consider that what Scripture reveals is revealed precisely *because* it is something beyond the natural powers of Man's Reason. And in these matters, the most acute and learned philosopher can know no more, and an ordinary Christian need know no less, than just what God has thought fit to teach. He has taught us in his Holy Word, what He judged it needful for us to know, not for the gratification of our curiosity, but with a view to practice, in order that we may be able to serve Him as we ought. And the Scriptures accordingly teach us, not so much the nature of God as He is in Himself, as the *relations* in which He stands to us, and in which we stand to Him,—what He has done for us, and what He requires of us.

But many men have always been found, who, though they acknowledge that the nature of the MOST HIGH is an impenetrable mystery, yet seem to regard all that the Scriptures make known concerning Him as merely furnishing fresh materials for philosophical speculation to work on. And thus they view

Christianity by the artificial light of their own metaphysical theories. When the illumination from Heaven—the rays of Revelation—fail to shed full light on the Gospel-dispensation, they bring to the dial-plate the lamp of human philosophy.*

§ 2.

Christianity made into two religions.

And many persons again, who have never pretended to be, themselves, learned and philosophical, have yet been admiring followers of those profane speculators, whom they suppose to possess a deep insight into divine mysteries, such as the generality of Christians are not expected to know anything about. And thus they make Christianity *two* religions—one for acute and learned Divines, and the other for the ordinary run of mankind. But the Gospel was a Revelation designed for all men, except savages, and those who are as untaught and brutish as savages. 'I thank Thee, O Father, (said our Lord,) that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast *revealed them unto babes.*' And again, He says to the humble fishermen who followed Him, 'Many prophets and kings have desired to hear those which ye hear, and have not

* Some persons have been so much struck with the resemblance between some of Plato's speculations, and those of certain ancient Theologians, respecting the Trinity, as even to imagine that he must have received some revelation from heaven!

But instead of concluding that Plato had had imparted to him by inspiration knowledge beyond what was communicated to the Apostles—or at least beyond what they were commissioned to teach—we ought rather to infer that those Theologians had corrupted the simplicity of the Gospel by mixing up with it Plato's philosophy.

heard them.' And what they did hear and learn from Him, in private, those things He charged them to publish 'from the house-tops.'

Test for detecting human speculations.

Those who are disposed to be dazzled by the ingenuity and learning of such speculative Divines as we have been speaking of, ought to make this reflection; 'If all this be so, what an *imperfect* Revelation must the Evangelists and Apostles have given us! How much of the essential parts of Christianity they must have *omitted*, and left for learned men, in after ages, to supply! And how much wiser must these men be than the inspired writers!' Now, since this is not to be believed, it follows that all their speculations are idle and profane fancies, arising out of a presumptuous ambition to be wise, 'above what is written.'

Any Christian, then, of plain good sense has an easy test by which he may try the soundness of religious systems taught by men far abler and more learned than himself. Any religion that is *unintelligible* to ordinary men such as those the Apostles addressed, *cannot be that Gospel* which the Apostles preached, but must be that 'philosophy and vain deceit' which they condemned, as being 'after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'

§ 3.

Many and various theories, however, such as we have been speaking of, have been devised at various times, by speculating men, who thus gave rise to here-

tical sects. And too often it happened, that those who opposed these heresies, endeavoured to do so by devising fresh theories of their own, and opposite explanations. These often gave rise to other and contrary heresies; and those again to others, without end.*

Danger of opposing one theory by another.

And these rival sects often persecuted each other with most unchristian bitterness, according as each gained the upper hand.

But fiercely as they were opposed to each other, most of the Divines of all these different schools were completely agreed in the wrong *principle* on which they proceeded,—the notion that we can, and that we should, attempt to give clear explanations of divine mysteries beyond what Scripture has made known; and that we are to deduce consequences from these explanations, and make these consequences Articles of Faith which every man is to be required to assent to.

All of these theories, accordingly, are alike to be condemned; and all for the same reason: namely—as being presumptuous speculations on matters which would have been fully made known to us in God's Word, if He had judged the knowledge of them necessary for us; and of which we can know nothing but what He has revealed. We should look, not so much to the objections that are urged against *each* of these speculations separately, as to the fault which belongs to them *all* equally. We should not be satisfied to condemn, for

* See Elements of Logic, Appendix—Art., PERSON.

example, the Arian theory for one reason, and the Sabellian, or the Nestorian, or the Socinian, &c., for others; or the Pelagian, or the Calvinistic, or the Arminian theory, for this or that particular reason; and so on: but *all* should be rejected alike, because they *are* all *theories*, relative to matters on which it is vain, and absurd, and irreverent, to attempt framing any philosophical theories at all.

All this you should reject, if you would (in the words of the Apostle Peter) 'desire, as new born babes, the sincere [unadulterated] milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.' (1 Pet. ii. 2.) If you would learn the very Gospel which the Apostles taught, just as it was received by their hearers, you must in heart and spirit accompany the simple shepherds in their visit 'to Bethlehem, to see (not what human philosophy has devised, but) what the LORD hath made known to us.'

§ 4.

Moral defects cause corruptions of doctrine.

[iv.] Many corruptions, again, of Christianity have been either introduced, or favoured and kept up, by *moral corruption* in the members of Christian Churches. For, it belongs to the true Gospel to purify and also to elevate the moral character. Hence there is a complete and constant opposition between genuine Christianity and all the evil and base propensities of man's nature. This is what Paul means when

he says, 'Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh; for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would:' that is, he who has within him two contrary tendencies, cannot at the same time yield to both.*

Every kind of depravity or moral defect, therefore, predisposes men either to reject Christianity altogether, or else to introduce, or to accept, some erroneous views of it. And there is no kind of religious corruption against which men are usually less on their guard. They are well aware, indeed, that there is a danger of men's falling into sin in *violation* of the precepts of religion. And they are not ignorant that a religion which is altogether *false* may have a bad moral effect on the worshippers. But they consider that a man who has embraced a true faith, and who is of a religious disposition, will necessarily be *made*, by his religion, a good moral man; or at least such a man as will be accepted as righteous by the God he worships.

Now, this is true, only if we suppose him to observe diligently the caution of Paul, 'that they who have believed in God should be *careful* to maintain

* The most exact translation would be—'these are so opposed to each other as to be an obstacle to your doing what ye desire to do.' By the expressions which are rendered 'flesh' and 'fleshly lusts' and a 'carnal mind, which is enmity against God,' Paul does not mean merely *sensual* excess, but *all* evil dispositions of the natural man. For he expressly charges the Corinthians with being 'carnal,' on account of their '*strifes* and *divisions*.'

good works;'*—'giving all *diligence*'† (as Peter exhorts us (to add to his faith, virtue, &c. But if he takes no vigilant *pains* in the improvement of his moral character, the result will be, that, instead of his religion's improving his character, his moral deficiencies, on the contrary, will tend to corrupt his religion. The rain itself, which falls pure from the heavens, will not continue pure if it be received in an unclean vessel.

And this kind of corruption took place—as has been above said—even in the days of Paul: who speaks of some 'who having cast away a *good conscience*, concerning [the] Faith have made shipwreck.' (1 Tim. i. 19.)

It will be sufficient, in such a work as this, just to mention some of the principal errors of this class, that have crept into the Church, without entering into a full examination of any of them.

§ 5.

Power of forgiving sins against God, attributed to a Priest.

1st. The notion that a Priest has power to forgive sins as against God‡ is evidently a doctrine very acceptable to such persons as have a sense of religion, combined with a great dislike to the practice of Christian virtue; and who, accordingly, are glad of any contrivance for being religious without virtue.

* Titus, ii. 14, and iii. 8. † 2 Pet. i. 5.
‡ See Lesson V.

2ndly. The same may be said of the doctrine, that fasting and other penances, —or pilgrimages to certain holy places, —or prayers and sacrifices offered up in behalf of the deceased,—or rich gifts bestowed on the Church, can atone for sin, and help to obtain for a man final salvation.* *Satisfaction for sins by penance, &c.*

3rdly. Of a like nature is the doctrine, that if a man who has led a thoroughly unchristian life shall on his death-bed receive the Lord's Supper, or the rite of 'Extreme Unction,' professing sorrow for his sins, and faith in Christ, we are authorized to pronounce that (supposing his professions to be, at the moment, sincere) his salvation is certain. *Salvation promised to death-bed penitents.*

Now, the utmost that Scripture can warrant in such a case is, that we are not forbidden to *hope*. But the Scripture-*promises* are all made to those who 'bring forth *fruits* meet for repentance.' And any one who presumes to hold out confident promises where Scripture does not, is evidently guilty of preaching, not the true Gospel, but one of man's invention.

4thly. The heresy of the ancient Gnostic Antinomians† has been already alluded to, as being held in such detestation by the Apostles.‡ [And some *Antinomian doctrines.*

* It is very remarkable that in all religions either devised by men, or corrupted by human inventions, there is a tendency to set aside certain particular *seasons*, or particular *persons*, for what is called 'mortification,'—that is, *self-torture*, as a kind of set-off against the toleration of general licentiousness at other times, or in other persons.—See Lesson II. § 6. See also Essay on Christian Self-denial.

† From 'anti,' against, and 'nomos,' law.

‡ See John 1st Ep. iii.; Paul to Rom. i. 18; 2 Pet. ii. 10–22; James, ii. 14–26; Jude, 4.

Antinomian doctrines much like theirs have been found in almost every Age of the Church. For example: That because 'by grace we are saved through faith, and that not of ourselves, but by the gift of God,'* and 'without the works of the Law,' therefore we may safely 'continue in sin that grace may abound'†—that certain persons may know and feel themselves set apart as 'God's People,' and that these are certain of salvation, though continuing in the practice of known sins, because God will not impute sin to *them*, do what they will; and that they ought not to be at all uneasy at any sins they may commit, because He purposely suffers 'his own People to fall into very grievous sins in order to show them their own weakness, and to *humble* them!' though in reality such a doctrine is likely to puff up a man with spiritual *pride*, in addition to all his other vices: since nothing is more flattering to a proud heart than the notion of being *privileged* to do without censure, or without danger, what *others* would be condemned for.

All these shocking absurdities, so utterly at variance with Scripture, have found their way into Christianity through the depravity of man. And when you consider, that besides the mischief done by such teachers to their own followers, they bring a scandal on Christianity itself, you cannot wonder at the abhorrence shown by the Apostles, of the Antinomians of their own day. They raised a prejudice against the Religion as being far worse than

* Eph. ii. 8. † Rom vi. 7.

no religion at all; because the doctrine they taught tends to silence the suggestions and the reproaches of natural conscience, and represents God as the encourager of vice.

§ 6.

Undesigned antinomian teaching.

5thly. Besides these avowed antinomian doctrines, there are others which are liable to be so understood as to lead practically to the same consequences; though these consequences are not designed or foreseen by those who incautiously teach such doctrines. For example: There are some good, well-meaning men who represent Paul as describing, in his Epistle to the Romans (chapter vii. 9—25), his own actual condition. If they would read the whole chapter through, (especially verse 9,) and then go on to the 8th chapter,* they would see that this is impossible; and that the Apostle is evidently describing the condition of a man under the Law, and not under the Gospel—sensible of the requirements of God's Law, but not under the influence of the Grace of the Gospel.

Now, any man who is living a life of gross vice, while he approves and admires virtue, will not be likely to be at all alarmed, or to consider moral

* The division into chapters and verses is not, we should remember, the work of the sacred writers, but made long after for convenience of reference.

It is generally by taking detached passages, and interpreting them without reference to the context, that the 'unlearned and unstable wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction.' (2 Peter, iii. 16.)

reformation as needful, or indeed as possible, if he believes himself to be just in the same condition with the Apostle Paul, and all the other most eminent Christians that ever existed. And he will be likely to regard all that is said in Scripture about holiness of life, as a kind of *theory* which no one is expected to bring into practice.

Again, the doctrine that 'nothing a man can do can forward his own salvation,' is indeed true in the sense that no good works of ours can establish a claim of merit in God's sight; and also in this sense, that we cannot lead a life of true Christian virtue, of ourselves, and without the aid of the Holy Spirit which 'helpeth our infirmities.' But if the doctrine is earnestly and continually taught without these explanations, the greater part of the hearers will understand it in a sense exactly opposed to Paul's exhortation to 'work out our own salvation with fear and trembling:' and they will also conclude that if to *keep* God's commandments cannot *further* a man's salvation, to *break* them cannot *hinder* his salvation. At least, the Christian is not incited to endeavour to 'grow in grace,' and to 'go on unto perfection.' And thus the doctrine becomes, in its consequences, completely antinomian.

§ 7.

Imputed Righteousness.

Again, some teach that Christ's obedience to the divine law is imputed to believers in Him; so that the good works He performed are reckoned in

God's sight as performed by them. This doctrine, though not warranted by Scripture,* is taught by some who are themselves striving to lead a virtuous life. But their hearers will be likely to conclude 'if Christ's *suffering* for us and in our stead is to exempt us from suffering in *our own* persons, then, by parity of reasoning, his performing in our stead good works which are imputed to us, as if *we* had performed them, must exempt us from all need of keeping God's commandments ourselves.' And though this may not be an inevitable conclusion, and explanations may be given which will avoid it, still, we may be sure that there *will* be a danger of men's drawing such an inference. And for this danger those teachers will be responsible who set forth a doctrine not clearly taught in Scripture. (See Whitby on this point.)

And some there are, who dwell exclusively on the efficacy of faith; teaching (which is quite true) that genuine Christian faith will not fail to bring forth the fruit of a Christian life. But if they do not at the same time teach, as our Lord and his Apostles do, the necessity of '*running*'—'*striving*'—'*watching*,'—being '*careful*'†—in their Christian course, their hearers will conclude that they have only to take care of their faith, and leave Christian virtue to

* Our Lord seems to be expressly guarding against this notion in the parable of the Marriage-feast. The Wedding-garment (which represents the 'righteousness of Christ,'—that is, the moral character which his Spirit enables us to attain to) was provided—according to the Oriental custom—by the king. But the guest who had refused to put it on was cast out without being allowed to plead—'*You* are clad in the wedding-garment; your wearing it may be *imputed* to me, and may serve instead of my putting it on.'

† 1 Cor. ix. 24; Luke, xiii. 24; Mark, xiii. 33—37.

follow of itself. And being once convinced that they have embraced the true faith, they will feel themselves in the condition of a man who has embarked on board a safe *ship*, bound to the right port, who has nothing to do but sit still and let himself be *carried* thither. And the consequence of their thus taking no pains or care in the moral cultivation of their mind will be (as has been observed above), that their Religion, instead of improving their moral character, will be itself corrupted by it; and having 'cast away a good conscience, they will make shipwreck of the faith.'*

The above are a part, and only a part, of the religious corruptions which have been introduced or fostered by moral corruption.

§ 8.

Corruptions caused by worldly policy.

[v.] Lastly, worldly policy has greatly helped to promote some of the worst religious errors. The same kind of men who would, most of them, have opposed Christianity, from covetous or ambitious views, when it was first preached, were disposed, afterwards, to distort the Religion so as to suit those views.

Ambitious ministers.

Thus, any worldly men who found their way into the Ministry, were tempted to favour any kind of superstitious error that tended to bring them profit and power. The people were often dis-

* 1 Tim. i. 19.

posed to fancy that the Priests could serve God in their stead, and that there were mysteries in Religion which the Priests understood, but which the Laity need not know anything of, and ought not to inquire into. And hence they were ready to follow blindly the guidance of the Priests in religious matters; just as a man trusts, in legal concerns, to his Lawyer, and in medical concerns, to his Physician; doing what they direct, and not considering it necessary himself to study Law or Medicine.

All these, and many other such erroneous notions have been encouraged by wordly-minded priests for the increase of their own power and wealth.

Ambitious civil-rulers.

Again; ambitious and worldly-minded Rulers are generally glad to make use of Religion as an instrument for securing the submission of the people to tyrannical oppression, and for aiding their ambitious views when they seek to subdue their neighbours under the pretext of propagating the true faith. Such men are disposed, like the Jews of old, to 'take Jesus by force to make Him a King;' that is, to make his a 'kingdom of this world.'

Such men perceive a political advantage in having the same religion professed by all their subjects; and they endeavour to secure this object by force. They make laws for the punishment of heretics: or to exclude from civil rights every one who is not a member of their Church; or they seek to compel every one to have his children taught their faith.

All these are so many different forms in which the

spirit of PERSECUTION shows itself, in varying degrees of violence.

§ 9.

Religious agreement should be sincere and voluntary.

Now, it is of course most desirable that all men should agree in true Christian faith and practice. But then, this profession of the Religion should be *sincere* and *voluntary*. It is utterly contrary to the spirit of Christ's religion to attempt to maintain or to propagate it by force. But it belongs to the 'natural man' to feel jealousy and dislike of those who differ from us in opinion on important points; and, when we fail to convince them, to wish to force them to submission; or at least to keep for ourselves what is called a 'political ascendancy' over them. And those who have a zeal for what they consider true religion, but who are strangers to the genuine spirit of the Gospel, persuade themselves that they are seeking God's glory and the good of mankind, in carrying out their own intolerant principles. Since Governments, they say, ought to seek the *good*—universally—of the subjects, and true religion is the greatest good, it must be the duty of the Civil Magistrate to insist on his subjects adhering to a true religion.

But they overlook two circumstances: 1st, that since the Magistrate must, by this rule, be himself the judge *what* religion is true, it would follow that the Jewish Rulers had a right to forbid the Apostles to preach the Gospel; and that the Apostles were bound to obey; and, 2ndly, that though the *sincere*

acceptance of true religion be the greatest good, an outward profession, in obedience to the laws, of what a man does not really believe, is no good at all, but a great evil.

Yet all this is overlooked by those who 'have a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge' of the true Gospel.

In addition, however, to mistaken religious zeal, there can be no doubt that men's minds are often biassed towards this particular corruption of Christianity, by worldly policy. The love of power and worldly pre-eminence helps to give this turn to their religious zeal. And thus they so far mistake the real character of Christianity, as to imagine it allowable, and even a sacred duty, to put down religious errors by force, or to secure a monopoly of civil rights in behalf of the members of their own Church.

II. § 10.

The above, then, are the chief sources from which corruptions of Christianity have sprung. And they correspond to those from which (as was pointed out in Lesson VI., §§ 3, 4, 5) originated the chief part of the early opposition to the religion: viz.—mistaken adherence to the Mosaic Law; superstition; misapplied philosophy; moral depravity; and worldly policy.

Means by which corruptions have been kept up and spread.

As for the *means* by which various religious errors have been kept up and spread, one of the principal is that employment of *coercion* which has been just noticed. As a general rule, a resort to restrictions, and to force of every

kind, must be, on the whole, more favourable to error than to truth, in all subjects: because it tends to take away the great *advantage* which truth has over error. Truth being in itself stronger than falsehood, may be expected to gain a superiority when there is free discussion. But Laws and Penalties may be on the wrong side as well as on the right. Those therefore who resort to these, may, not unfairly, be presumed to have, themselves, some distrust of the goodness of their cause, since they remove the trial from a Court (that of Reason) in which truth has an advantage over falsehood, and appeal to brute-force, in which truth has no such advantage. A fair and *free trial* is what, generally speaking, the intelligent advocates of truth, in all subjects, will be likely to call for, and the advocates of error, to deprecate.

Resort to coercion favourable to the wrong side.

Moreover, in regard to religious questions, the resort to coercion proves a person to have totally mistaken the character of Christianity as to *one* most important point; so that there is a probability that he will have mistaken other points also.

Mistaken notion of Christian unity.

That erroneous view, again, of Christian *Unity*, which has been noticed in Lesson IV., has tended very much to keep up and to extend other errors. For if a man is once convinced that all Christians are bound to belong to some one Community on earth, he will dread nothing so much as separation from that Church, whatever it may be,

which he considers as having the best claim to *be* that one community.

And thus, a *majority* will be enabled completely to dictate to the understanding, and to domineer over the conscience, of all the rest. For, whatever strong reasons a man may see for condemning any corruptions which that Church may have sanctioned, he will labour to stifle his convictions, and to believe any absurdity, or approve of any abuse, rather than exclude himself, as he supposes, from the true Church.

So, also, a mistake as to the true limits of Church-authority (see Lesson V.) is one which tends to foster other mistakes. If a Church assumes the right of setting aside the precepts of Scripture, or of giving any interpretations whatever of them to suit its own views, or of 'making the Word of God of none effect through their tradition,' a man will be led to submit to all this against his better judgment, if he is persuaded that he is only submitting to the authority which Christ has appointed for his guidance in all that pertains to religion.

Ignorance of Scripture among the people.

And lastly, the prevalence of this error leads to the neglect of the study of the Scriptures, and even to their being left untranslated, and inaccessible to the people. For as no one need study medical books, himself, if he is placed under the care of a skilful physician, so there seems no need for any one to study Scripture, if he has others to do it for him, whose interpretations, after all, he is

bound to receive, and who are ready to tell him what he is to believe and do.

And thus *general ignorance* will soon prevail; which is the greatest encourager and supporter of every kind of error and abuse. For when the light of the Gospel which was given for the illumination of the World is thus 'put under a bushel,' men are thenceforward left to grope in darkness, without any means of distinguishing truth from falsehood, or genuine Religion from the grossest superstitions.

Books from which principally the above Lesson was compiled:—

Dr. West's Discourse on 'Reserve.' (See Lesson V.)

Essays on some of the Dangers to Christian Faith which may arise from the Teaching or the Conduct of its Professors. Second Edition, Octavo. By Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.

Archbishop Whately's Essays on the Errors of Romanism. (See Lesson VI.)

Archbishop Whately's Sermons. Sermon IV. A Christian Place of Worship. Sermon V. The Shepherds at Bethlehem. (See Lsson IV.)

Archbishop Whately's Essays on some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul. (See Lesson III.)

LESSON VIII.

REFORMATIONS IN RELIGION.—PART I.

§ 1.

Watchfulness against corruptions needful.

We have seen that corruptions of Christianity have existed, from the days of the Apostles, downwards; and that these inspired teachers warned men to be on their guard against this danger. They exhort us to 'take heed to ourselves,' on account of 'deceitful teachers,' and to 'prove [try] all things, and hold fast that which is right.'

Christians, then, are evidently bound to be carefully watchful against any corruption of the 'simplicity [purity] of the Gospel.' And whenever they shall find that any unscriptural doctrines or practices have crept in, it is their duty to exert themselves for the correction of the evil.

And accordingly it appears that almost every one of the corruptions which have prevailed in Christian Churches, was opposed, more or less, at its first introduction. Yet on the whole, this opposition was, for many centuries, so far ineffectual, that the religion of the greater part of the Christian world degenerated more and more from its original purity.

Of course we do not design to give an account of

the various attempts made (with or without success) to resist the introduction of corruptions, or to drive them out. It will be sufficient to point out :—

Hindrances to correction of faults.

I. What are the principal hindrances that have stood in the way of a successful opposition to errors and abuses, and of needful reformations.*

Errors to which reformers are liable.

II. What are the faults that reformers are chiefly liable to, and against which, consequently, men ought to be especially on their guard.

Three causes have proved hindrances to reform.

I. There are three mistakes frequently committed by Christians, each of which has contributed to prevent successful opposition to corruptions, and correction of them.

(1.) Some have attached too much importance to *matters not essential,* and have contended too earnestly about them.

(2.) Others—and sometimes, indeed, even the very same persons—have acquiesced in very serious corruptions through a mistaken anxiety for what they consider *Christian-unity* and concord.

(3.) A third cause tending to the same effects is, a mistaken *dread of innovations.* Those who are on their guard *only* against *sudden* corruptions, and overlook such as creep in silently and gradually, will be disposed to resist as innovations what are, in

* In modern language one sometimes hears of 'reforming abuses.' But this is an impropriety. It is an *institution* that is *reformed* : abuses are to be *remedied* [corrected.]

truth, *restorations*; and to maintain what are, in reality, *very great and mischievous* innovations.

§ 2.

Undue attention to matters unimportant.

(1.) When men are once engaged in a *contest* on any question, their eagerness is apt to increase as the debate goes on: and they often come to regard some matter that is really of very small consequence, as if it were of the greatest. Thus, their attention is often drawn off from things far more important.

Controversies about the times of religious festivals.

For example, There have been fierce controversies among Christians about the proper time for celebrating the festival of Easter. And this is one of those many cases in which the attempt to unite all Christians under the government of *one single community on earth* has led to discord instead of concord. For, it is necessary that in any *one* Church, the times for celebrating religious festivals should be fixed by authority; however unimportant it may be *what* shall be the time fixed. But two or more independent Churches may differ, in this, and in several other non-essential points, without hostility and strife. Such questions, however, immediately become a source of strife, as soon as it is thought necessary to unite these Churches into one.

And the same may be said of that most bitter dissension which arose between the Eastern and

Western Churches as to the use of leavened or unleavened bread at the Lord's Supper. And at the very time when these controversies about such comparatively insignificant points were raging with the utmost fury, the unscriptural practice of applying to the Virgin and other departed Christians [saints] as mediators (besides many other superstitions), was spreading widely among Christians.

Controversies about the bread at the Eucharist.

So, also, in later times, and even in our own day, there have been vehement debates of the question whether a clergyman should preach in a black dress or a white one. And the attention of many persons has thus been called off from the far more important question as to the soundness of the doctrine preached. While occupied about the colour of a vestment, they have overlooked the serious corruptions of the faith introduced by such as were 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'

Controversy about vestments.

§ 3.

And, again, the schism of the Donatists, which gave rise to one of the most furious contentions that ever existed among Christians, originated merely in a question as to the regularity of the appointment of a certain bishop. These persons having taken up that notion respecting 'apostolical succession' which has been noticed above (in Lesson V.), they would not allow that the ministers ordained by the bishop

Schism of the Donatists.

whose succession they disputed were ordained at all; or that any whom these baptized were really Christians, &c. And while this fierce contest lasted, which was nearly two centuries (from the 4th to the 6th), men's attention was drawn off by it from essential points, and various corruptions were allowed to spread, unchecked and unnoticed.

Peace preferred to purity of religion.

Moreover, one effect of such contests is, that many men are apt to become, at length, so weary of strife, as to be ready to purchase peace at any price, and to acquiesce in various abuses and errors in important points, rather than run the risk of exciting any controversy.

Now we ought certainly to prefer peace and Christian concord to everything *except* the essentials of Gospel-truth and pure worship. But these must not be given up even for the sake of peace.

For, religious *agreement* is not that Christian-concord which it is so important to aim at, unless it be agreement in the *genuine* Religion of the Gospel. There may be an agreement in error as well as in truth.

But, as has been just said, vehement and long-continued disputes about matters of minor importance which are not worth so much contention, will often drive men into the opposite extreme, and make them ready to consent to anything for the sake of peace and unity.

§ 4.

Mistaken views of Christian unity.

(2.) And thus they are led to commit the second of those mistakes above adverted to, and to resist all correction of abuses, for fear of unsettling men's minds, disturbing the peace of the Church, and violating its Unity.

And this is especially the case when men have taken up that notion respecting Christian Unity (already noticed in Lessons IV. and VII.) which represents it as consisting in having *one community on earth* to which all Christians belong, or ought to belong, and to whose government all are bound to submit.

It is true, the same kind of feeling may influence the members of *any* Church, even one which does not claim to be '*the* universal church.' For men are undoubtedly bound to be very careful not to 'cause divisions' (Rom. xvi. 17) hastily, or on slight grounds. Whatever Christian Church they find themselves belonging to, they are bound to give no occasion of any schism—any unfriendly separation from it—unless they are fully convinced on deliberate reflection that its doctrines or practices are at variance, in essential points, with Scripture, and that there is no reasonable hope of reform. But, on the other hand, if the rulers of any Church force a part of its members to separate from it, by maintaining what is really thus unscriptural (and of this, the All-Wise God alone can be the infallible judge), the guilt of the schism lies with those rulers.

The questions, however, What *is* or is not scriptural? and *what* points are essential?—are to be very carefully and candidly considered, under a sense of awful responsibility to God; and are questions on which different men often comes to different conclusions.

Right and wrong dread of schism.

And hence, while some are guilty of hastily causing divisions on wrong grounds, or on insufficient grounds (as if each man were free to consult his own fancy or convenience in such matters), others sometimes fall into the opposite extreme. For there are persons who will bring themselves to acquiesce in something which they perceive to be fundamentally wrong, for fear of being guilty of causing a schism.

§ 5.

Mistake of regarding the Church as one community.

Now this latter fault, men are (as has been just said) much more liable to, who consider 'the true Church,' to be, necessarily, one community under a *single government on earth*. For (as was observed in the preceding Lesson, § 10), all Christ's promises being made to his CHURCH, they feel that a separation from that community which they regard as the Universal [Catholic] Church, would be to renounce the Gospel Covenant.* And thence they are led to infer, either that Christ allows this Church to depart in important points from the written Word, or else

* See Logic, Appendix.—Art. CHURCH.

that what plainly appears *to be* departures from it, are somehow reconcileable with it.

They would, perhaps, be glad if the governors of their Church could be prevailed on to remedy such and such an abuse. But if these resolve, in compliance with the wish of the majority, to retain it, such persons consider that they have only to submit, rather than forfeit (as they imagine) *all* their Christian hopes at once. To oppose or question the decisions of the Church which they regard as the divinely-appointed Authority and Guide for all Christians in whatever pertains to religion, they consider as a rebellion against Christ. And thus they in time force themselves to believe their Church *infallible*—to assent to and uphold the grossest corruptions—and to resist all attempts at correction.

Distinct Churches founded by the Apostles.

This mistake as to the nature of Christian unity is one which (as was observed in Lesson IV.) could hardly arise in the days of the Apostles. For *they* manifestly founded many distinct Churches, agreeing indeed in Faith, but quite independent of each other, and having no common Head on Earth. And the Bishops [that is, superintendents] which they appointed, for the government of most (if not all) of these Churches, differed as much from the Bishops of later times, as a Sovereign-prince does from a colonial governor. Each was the Head-Presbyter, to whom was intrusted the chief power in an entire Church.

§ 6.

Councils.

It was indeed allowable and desirable that delegates from these several Churches should assemble from time to time to hold a Council (or, as it is called in political affairs, a Congress) for the purpose of conferring together on religious questions, and concerting measures for putting down false doctrines and abuses. This did not necessarily destroy the independence of the Churches; any more than Sovereign-states surrender their independence when they send ambassadors to a Congress to deliberate concerning a treaty. But ambitious men, when they obtained a majority in any of these Councils, naturally encouraged the notion that the minority were bound to submit to their decisions, whether they would or no. This, so far, tended to combine all these Churches into one. And when the chief part of the Roman empire became Christian, the Emperors always sought to favour this combination, in order that they might the more easily and the more completely control it.

Worldly policy tended to combine many Churches into one.

And that this worldly policy of theirs had a principal share in the uniting of the several distinct Christian communities into one, is plain from the circumstance that it was not *Jerusalem*— the earliest Christian Church, and from which all others were off-sets—but *Rome*, the *political* Capital of the Empire that

came to be regarded as the seat of government, and centre of the Universal Church.

Extent of a Church not defined by Scripture.

There is not, indeed, any rule laid down by divine authority, what is to be the greatest extent of a single Church. It cannot, therefore, be said that there is in Scripture any direct prohibition of Christians all over the world uniting themselves into one single community, but the example left us by the Apostles, in founding many distinct Churches, independent of that of Jerusalem, and of each other, shows that they did not consider a very extensive Church as either a necessary or a desirable thing.* And the inconvenience is so manifest and so great, of placing under one Church-government men of different nations, far distant from each other, and differing in language and in customs, that we may be sure no such thing would ever have been thought of, except either for reasons of worldly policy, or else from a misconception of the character of Christ's kingdom.

§ 7.

The ruler of a great empire, containing many provinces, may naturally wish (as has been said) that all his subjects should be members of the same Church. And the supreme rulers [hierarchy] of any Church are likely to be tempted by ambition to extend that Church as widely as pos-

Ambition of Ecclesiastical Rulers.

* Not only were there several distinct Churches in the one Province of Macedonia, and in that of Achaia, but the one Epistle to the Galatians is addressed to 'the *Churches* of Galatia.

sible. Those, again, who make that mistake above alluded to, respecting the true meaning of Christian-unity, will readily enter into these views. And some will be likely to fancy that the governors of a single Church comprehending all Christians will be likely to prevent such errors as might spring up in some out of a multitude of independent Churches, and thus preserve the purity of Gospel-truth. But this is to suppose that the governors of the universal Church are to be *infallible*. Else, it is plain that they may fall into error as easily as the governors of a smaller Church, and may employ their extensive power in maintaining and spreading such error. And, accordingly, all who contend for a Universal Church, in the sense of a single community under one government on earth, always (as has been said) lay claim — more or less distinctly—to infallibility, as belonging to that Church.

Mistake respecting the Universal Church leads to the claim of infallibility.

But as no such infallibility can be proved, or does exist, the result has been that all attempts to give universal dominion to a single Church have increased the difficulty of checking and of correcting corruptions.

§ 8.

For example—one great abuse, and which is the parent of many others, the keeping of the Scriptures and of the public Service in a dead language, was doubtless much favoured by the great extent

Abuse of keeping Scripture and public worship in an unknown tongue.

of a single Church. The abuse was not one that originated in very early times. For it was not caused by men's having from the first a superstitious dread of any attempt to translate the Scriptures at all, and consequently leaving them in the original Hebrew or Greek. On the contrary, they were *translated* into Latin when that was the prevailing language, on *purpose* that they might be accessible to the people. And afterwards, when Latin gradually ceased to be spoken, in the Provinces, and at length, in Rome itself, the Latin Bible and Prayer Books continued in use after they had ceased to be understood by the mass of the people. No one could point out the precise time when a new translation first became necessary; because the change of Latin into Italian, Spanish, &c., was gradual. And men had a sort of superstitious veneration for the language which they and their fathers had been accustomed to hear employed in Divine service.

Now this is an error which it served the purpose of an ambitious Church to keep up.* All over the world, as far as the dominion of that Church extended, the priests had a language of their own, not understood by the common people, and in which alone the Sacred Books could be studied. And thus the people could know little or nothing of their Religion, except just what these Priests chose to tell them.

* The enforcement of celibacy on the clergy (for which there is no warrant in Scripture), was also manifestly favourable to the ambitious views of a supreme central government, as it tended to keep the clergy unconnected with the people.

Now it is true, indeed, that the same error might find its way into each of several independent Churches, however small. It is conceivable, for example, that independent Churches in various parts of the world might have retained, some, an ancient Gothic translation of the Bible, some, an Anglo-Saxon, &c., long after those languages had ceased to be spoken. But then it is far less likely that *every one* of forty or fifty independent churches should persist in this error, than that *one* should do so. And if *some* of those churches, or even any one of them, had made new translations of the Bible to meet the wants of the people, the others would have been shamed into following their example in a thing so evidently reasonable.

The evil more open to correction in several independent Churches.

§ 9.

And this is proved by what has actually taken place. At the time of Luther's Reformation, and long before, the translating of the Scriptures into modern languages was most earnestly opposed by those who adhered to the Church of Rome. The Scriptures, which were originally addressed to Christians of all classes, including slaves, were represented as unfit for the perusal of the common people. But since then, the Romanists have in some measure followed the example of those Churches which they denounce as

Example of reformed Churches followed.

heretical.* They have among them now (though not in perfectly free circulation), translations of Scripture into English, French, Italian, and other languages. And some of them have also Prayer-books, with the Latin and their own language printed in parallel columns, so as to enable them to understand the Service that is going on.†

There can be little doubt, therefore, that this would have been done long before if there had been all along numerous independent Churches, such as the Apostles established.

Prevailing ignorance pleaded as an excuse.

It is true, indeed, that before the time of that Reformation, and indeed, in a less degree, for a good while after it, the prevailing ignorance was such that few besides the clergy could read at all. But then you should remember, (1st) that to have the Church-Service—including the reading of the Scriptures—in a language understood by the people is a most important benefit even to those who can-

* This great and important *change* completely disproves what is maintained by the advocates, and by the bitterest enemies, of the Church of Rome—the *unchangeable* character of that Church. But there is nothing so grossly and notoriously false as not to gain credence, if maintained by both of two opposite parties.

† As for the celebration of Divine-Service in Latin, it has even been made a matter of boast by the Romanist, that in a foreign country, a priest going thither ignorant of its language, can at once perform Service, as at home; and that a traveller equally ignorant of the country can attend the Service of his Church, which is the same everywhere; while a member of any other communion would be at a loss.

This is as if a blind man should make it a matter of boast that he is not incommoded by the short days of winter, and has no occasion for candles. That day and night are alike to him, would indeed be an advantage, if he could see in *both*; but not when the case is that he can see in *neither*.

not themselves read; and, (2ndly) that this gross ignorance would not have *existed* if the Clergy had all along done their duty, in presenting to the people the Scriptures in their own language, and encouraging them to learn to read for the very purpose of studying those Scriptures as they ought.

It is plain, therefore, that the abuse we have been speaking of was left much the longer unremedied in consequence of the dominion of *one* Church of vast extent.

And the same may be said of many other abuses. A reform that is evidently needed is more likely to be resisted by *one* community than by *every one* of many independent communities. Any one out of several distinct Churches, when it corrects something that is manifestly wrong, sets an example which others are not unlikely to follow. And this advantage is wanting when all or nearly all Christians are put under one single government.

§ 10.

Many early corruptions resisted.

The causes above mentioned have proved in very many instances great hindrances to needful reforms. Nevertheless, may attempts were made, in the earlier Ages of the Church, to introduce errors and abuses, which were vigorously and often successfully resisted. We have on record many varieties of false doctrine and corrupt worship (most of them now nearly forgotten) which were generally condemned and expelled, as heretical.*

* You are to observe that a 'Heretic' properly signifies a person who maintains some false doctrine condemned by the *Church of*

Unfortunately, indeed, if often happened that the mode in which many of the ancient heresies were opposed (see Lesson VI.) was such as to have the effect of giving rise to fresh heresies. But it was with good reason that the majority of the early Christians—and, indeed, of Christians in all Ages—always opposed (though not always wise in their mode of proceeding) every *innovation* in doctrine. They justly considered that anything *new* (in essential points) introduced into Christianity must be wrong.

Whatever is really a religious novelty ought to be opposed.

(3.) But then, they often committed the fault—the third of those noticed in the beginning of this Lesson,—of being on their guard *only* against *sudden* corruptions;—against any innovation brought in *openly* and all at once. They overlooked (as men are apt to do in all subjects) the principle so well laid down by the great Lord Bacon, that '*Time* is the greatest innovator;' that it 'introduces changes so silently and gently as to escape notice;' and that 'since

Innovations gradually introduced.

which he is a member. No *Church* therefore can be, in strictness of speech, *heretical*, though it may be erroneous. Accordingly, the Church of England, for example, pronounces the Church of Rome to have 'erred;' but does not apply the term 'heresy' to its errors, because it acknowledges the Church of Rome to be a distinct, independent church. The Romanists, on the other hand, pronounce the Church of England 'heretical,' because they reckon all Christians as members—even though disobedient and rebellious members—of their own Church. Those of them at least who do *not* (for there is a good deal of uncertainty on this point), cannot maintain that their own Church *is* Universal [Catholic] in the ordinary sense of the word, namely, as *actually* comprehending *all* Christians. They should rather call it 'the Church which *seeks* to be Universal.'—(See Eden's *Theological Dictionary*.—Art. HERESY.)

things alter for the worse *spontaneously*, hence, if they be not altered for the better designedly, there will be no end of the evil.' To resolve that *no* changes shall take place is to talk idly. One might as well forbid the winds to vary, or the tides to flow. But to resolve that no changes shall take place *except* such as are *undesigned* and accidental, is to determine that though a clock may gain or lose indefinitely, we will take care that it shall never be *regulated*.

Change of the style.

What is called 'the change of the *style*,' is a striking instance of a seeming *innovation* which was really a *restoration*; being a return to the right course, by the sudden correction of a great error that had resulted from the accumulation of imperceptibly small ones.

The year contains 365 days and (*almost*) a quarter. To keep the reckoning right, an additional day is inserted, in February, every fourth [leap] year, to make up the four quarters of a day. But this addition is a *very little* too much: the excess amounting to three days in every 400 years.

And this continually increasing error went on uncorrected (in this country) till it amounted to eleven days.

In the middle of last century, we corrected it, by adopting what is called 'The New Style,' and at once cutting off those days; just as one puts forward the hands of a clock which has lost.

But this, though it was in truth only a *restoration* of the true time, appeared to ignorant people a great and offensive *innovation*; because it was a correction made all at once, of an error which had crept in by little and little.

Abuse of keeping Scripture in a dead language crept in gradually.

In religious matters, a remarkable instance of a *gradual* corruption, and a *sudden* reform, is the point already noticed — the keeping of the Scriptures in a language unknown to the People. This was a most enormous *innovation*; since the Sacred Writers manifestly addressed themselves to Christians of all ranks. But it was overlooked, because it was no *sudden* innovation. The Latin language went out of use *gradually*. No one can fix the precise day or year on which a fresh translation was first needed. But when men did perceive the need, and translated the Bible into modern languages, this was a great and palpable *novelty*. And, as such, it was vehemently opposed; though in reality it was in spirit, a *restoration* of the original state of things; the placing of the Scriptures before the People in a language which they understood.

§ 11.

So, also, there can be no doubt, that the change of Christian ministers into *sacerdotal* [sacrificing] *Priests*, making offerings on an Altar, and also the custom of invoking saints, and most of the other corruptions already noticed, crept in gradually and insensibly.

Saint worship crept in gradually.

The fond veneration for the memory of any holy martyr, led men to visit his tomb, and to preserve carefully his garments, or other relics, and also images or pictures of him. They naturally prayed to God, with these images before them, for grace to

follow the good example of such a holy man. And thence they were gradually led to beg for his intercession, and, in fact, to worship him.

Then, when this had become a long-established corruption, and when men were called on at once to renounce it, and to pray to none but the all-present God, many were startled at the *innovation*, and resolved to keep to the '*old* religion,' and to worship as their ancestors had done for centuries; rejecting as heretical all new doctrines. For, to *them*, the observance of the first and second Commandments *was* a novelty; though, in reality, it was only a *return* to the primitive worship.

And so it was, no doubt, with the greater part of the corruptions that crept into Christianity. Men were not sufficiently on their guard against them, because they came in by little and little. And then, when correction was attempted, many resisted it, and would not allow that these *were* corruptions, because no one could point out the precise time they arose.

But if we look to SCRIPTURE, and compare with this the doctrines and practices of some Christian Churches, it will be plainly seen that their religion *has* been corrupted; though we may not be able to say exactly *when*, or by what means.

Great corruptions arising from accumulation of small ones.

And this is the only safe course of proceeding. For when a book, for instance, is often reprinted, the only way to insure accuracy is to collate carefully each edition with the original copy. Sometimes this is neglected; and the

2nd edition is printed from the 1st; and the 3rd from the 2nd; and so on, down to, perhaps, twenty or thirty editions. And the result has generally been that though each edition has but a very few fresh misprints, and differs but very little from the preceding, yet the 20th or 30th edition will be found, when compared with the original, to be excessively incorrect, through the accumulation of a multitude of small errors.

In like manner, if we would keep our Religion pure both from new and from old corruptions, we must go straight to the very fountain-head itself, and observe what is or is not agreeable to the inspired Word.

Books from which principally the above lesson was compiled:—

Eden's Churchman's Theological Dictionary. (See Lesson IV.)

Bishop Burnet's History of the Reformation in England, abridged. Edited with additions and corrections by the Rev. Professor Corrie. Octavo. London: John W. Parker, West Strand.

Waddington's History of the Church. (See Lesson VI.)

History of the Reformation in the 16th and 17th Centuries. By J. H. Merle D'Aubigné. Four Volumes, Octavo. London; Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Hall Court.

An Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church. By Peter, first Lord King. Octavo. London: Seeley and Co.

Original Draught of the Primitive Church. By William Sclater. Oxford: Talboys.

Neander's History of the Christian Religion and Church. Translated by the Rev. H. J. Rose. (See Lesson VI.)

And several of the works mentioned at the end of the former Lessons.

LESSON IX.

REFORMATIONS IN RELIGION.—PART II.

§ 1.

Thorough Reformation made necessary by neglect of timely remedies.

II. From the causes, then, which we have been speaking of, the correction of various abuses was so much impeded and so long delayed, that thorough *Reformation* became necessary.

By the 'reformation' of a Church is generally understood a *fundamental change* in doctrine and worship, as distinguished from slight alterations. And we use the word reformation in a corresponding sense, in reference to any other institution also. It is like the pulling down and *rebuilding* of great part of a house, as distinguished from the many small *repairs* which are made every year by a prudent man, and the occasional small improvements he may see need for. Those repairs and improvements he makes on purpose that he may be saved from the far greater cost and inconvenience of rebuilding, which is an evil in itself, though a necessary evil when timely repairs have been neglected.

So also, every reformation is an evil, on account of the general disturbance and agitating alarm it tends

to produce. But this is a less evil than the utter corruption of Christianity. And there is no other alternative when errors and abuses have been long suffered to accumulate, and all timely remedies have been obstinately rejected.

But many persons are led by their dread of the evils and dangers of a reformation, to oppose it as long as possible, and to endeavour to delay it; not considering that the longer it is deferred, the more violent and dangerous it is likely to be.

Dangers to which reformations are liable.

The principal dangers to which reformers are liable, may be classed under these two heads :—

(1.) They are apt to feel too secure against falling into the faults of the system they are reforming. They often *retain* several of their former wrong notions; and accordingly commit some of the same errors, in substance, though in some new shape—as those they undertook to remedy.

(2.) And, secondly, they are apt not to be sufficiently on their guard against *reactions*. In their abhorrence of what is wrong, they have often rejected what is right along with it, and have often rushed from one extreme to the other; not considering that there may be two errors quite opposite to each other, and that men in their eagerness to avoid one fault will often be blinded to the danger of committing a contrary fault, that is, perhaps, even worse than the first.

§ 2.

(1.) When men feel a very strong abhorrence of

any fault in the particular form in which they have been used to see it, they are apt to feel too much self-confidence in reference to that fault; and not to be on their guard against falling into (substantially) the same fault in some other shape.

Retention of erroneous principles.

For example: The detestation felt by the early Christians for the pagan worship of the images of Jupiter and Juno, and other gods and goddesses, made them feel secure against any danger of idolatry, in a Christian Church. And this absence of self-distrust contributed to their falling into similar superstitions under different names (see Lesson VI. § 11), by paying adoration to images of Beings whom they do not call *gods and goddesses,* but male and female *Saints.*

So, also, in the present case, reformers often retained some of the erroneous principles which had led to the abuses they were correcting; and thus they frequently themselves committed like errors, though in a different shape.

For example; They were fully convinced that the claims of the Church of Rome to *infallibility* are unfounded. But many still clung to the notion that infallibility must be lodged *somewhere* on Earth. They still thought a divine *Revelation* necessarily implied an unerring guide for the right *interpretation of that Revelation.**

Retention of the error respecting infallibility.

* This notion even clings to the minds of many who have become altogether unbelievers in Christianity; and indeed has probably had a great share in *making* them infidels. For, finding that there is

Obscure notion of an infallible Universal Church.

Some of them, accordingly fancied that there must be somewhere, though not at Rome, an infallible Universal Church; though they sought in vain to find any person or Body of men having acknowledged power of any kind, over all Christians, and entitled to represent and to dictate to the whole Christian World.

And there are, even now, not a few persons, members of reformed Churches, who suffer themselves to be mystified by the vague and obscure language of artful leaders, and to be deluded into a belief in the infallibility of a certain Universal Church consisting of all the 'orthodox,' that is, all those who agree in opinion with those leaders. And thus they fancy themselves bound to receive as gospel-truth whatever they are told by those leaders, whom they regard as most *profound* theologians. For as muddy water is often supposed to be *deep*, from one's not being able to see to the bottom of it, while that which is exceedingly clear is thought shallower than it is, so weak men are apt to admire as very profound, in Theology or in Philosophy, what they cannot clearly understand, and to despise as shallow whatever is made very plainly intelligible.

certainly no Church or person on Earth who can satisfactorily establish a claim to infallibility, and yet retaining the conviction that a Revelation *implies* an infallible interpreter of it, they thence conclude that no Revelation has ever been bestowed.

§ 3.

Pretensions to inspiration.

Others, again, of those who cling to the notion of an infallible interpreter of Scripture have concluded that every sincere Christian, or that they themselves, or that certain persons whom they look up to as pre-eminently holy, do possess this unerring guide, in the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Whatever is really dictated by that Spirit, they justly concluded, must be infallibly right. And they found in Scripture promises of the aid of that Spirit. They inferred, therefore, that whatever occurred to their minds after having prayed for this spiritual aid, must be the true interpretation of Scripture, which consequently all men are bound to acknowledge and submit to.

Infallibility no more promised than impeccability.

It is remarkable that most of the persons who put forth such claims do not pretend to exemption from *Sin*, though they hold themselves to be exempt from the possibility of *doctrinal error*. To suggest a doubt as to the truth of any *doctrine* they maintain, they regard as questioning the truth of God Himself. But for any man to account himself *impeccable* [exempt from the possibility of wrong conduct], they consider as an impious presumption. And yet the office of the Holy Spirit is to lead us, not only 'into all *truth*,' but also into

'all *righteousness*;' for 'the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness, *and* truth.' (Ephesians, v. 9.) And though both are highly important, most persons would allow that this latter is the more so. If a man were offered the choice—supposing he could not have both—of being completely secured, either from all *mistakes* in doctrinal points, or from all *sin*, he would hardly hesitate to acknowledge that the latter would be the more valuable gift. Yet the very same persons who make no claim to *unerring rectitude of conduct* and exemption from *sin*, will hold themselves to have attained unerring rectitude of *judgment*, and exemption from *error*; and will regard any doubt on *that* point as a distrust of God's promises. And yet they are no more promised infallibility than impeccability.

Each man's conscience set up as an infallible standard.

Some, however, there are who seem to think that both in doctrinal questions and in moral questions also, their judgment is infallibly right; and that though, in practice, they are liable to go wrong, this can only be when they offend *against* the dictates of their own conscience. This is to claim a great superiority over the Apostle Paul, and to reverse his procedure. For *he* says (1 Cor. iv.), 'I udge not mine own self: for I know nothing against myself' (that is, I am not conscious of any wrong); 'yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord.' *He* therefore did *not* set up his own conscience as an infallible standard of right and wrong.

A circumstance, however, which is still more remarkable is this: that many of those who thus in reality lay claim to '*inspiration*' and '*infallibility*,' yet carefully keep clear of those *words*. They do not *call* themselves inspired or infallible. And yet it is plain that a man who feels quite certain that his interpretations of Scripture are suggested by the very Spirit which dictated that Scripture, is so far claiming just as real an inspiration as the Sacred Writers themselves possessed. If he feels quite certain that he is *unerringly following* an *infallible guide*, he must in reality regard himself as infallible.

Inspiration disclaimed in words.

In this, as in many other cases, men are misled by *names*. They mistake for two different doctrines what are in reality only two different expressions of the very same.

§ 4.

When, however, a large portion of the Christian World which had been under the dominion of a single Church, had thrown off that yoke, the danger of falling into the mistake of looking for an infallible guide on earth was much diminished. For, those inclined to such a notion would naturally, as long as they were under *one* Church, look to that Church as the seat of the infallibility. But when they were separated into several distinct communities, the error tended—if one may so speak—to cure itself.

Conflicting claims to infallibility.

For then, several *conflicting* claims to infallibility were of course put forth by persons teaching *different* doctrines, yet who each professed (and doubtless often with truth) to have earnestly prayed for inspiration. And as it was plain that *all* these claims could not be well-founded, this naturally put men on inquiring whether *any* of them were so. And then all sober-minded men perceived that the only *proof* of inspiration, and that which must necessarily accompany it—the display of *miraculous* signs—was wanting in *all* the claimants; and consequently that no infallible guide on Earth has been provided.

But the error, though greatly checked, is still to be found among weak-minded enthusiasts, who cannot, or will not, think accurately.

Cause of the mistake respecting infallibility.

It is kept up in them, in great measure, by their confounding together the infallibility of the guide in *itself*, and *our* infallibility in following that guide. For instance, if, on the one hand, the mariner steers by a *chart*, then, even though he conform to it quite exactly, yet if this chart itself be at all incorrect, he may be misled by it. If, on the other hand, he steers by a star, he is sure that his *guide* cannot be wrong; but yet *he* may be misled if he mistakes one star for another. If, however, he is convinced that this is totally impossible, and that he is *infallibly following* an infallible guide, it is plain he reckons himself infallible.

And even so, though the Scriptures and the Spirit of God cannot themselves err, no one has a right to

pronounce confidently that he is exactly conforming to them, unless he is favoured with some sensibly-miraculous sign from Heaven to assure him of this. Without such a sign, 'if we say that we have no sin' —or that we have no error—'we deceive ourselves.' For even if, in some point, our judgment or our conduct *be*, in point of fact, perfectly right, still, as we cannot with perfect certainty *know* this (during our state of tria. on Earth), we have no right confidently to claim it. (See Lesson V., § 9.)

§ 5.

Principle of persecution not abandoned.

Another wrong principle which has been retained by many reformers, is that of *persecution*. By the *principle* of persecution we mean the notion that it is allowable and right to use secular coercion in religious matters, or to maintain what is called the political 'ascendancy' of those who profess the true faith; so that they should monopolise civil rights and privileges.

The reason why we speak, not of *persecution* itself, but of the persecuting *principle*, is, that where this principle is the most thoroughly carried out, there will be no *actual* persecution. In any Country where all who dissented from the Established Faith have been either killed or banished, or compelled to conform, there is no longer any one to be persecuted. No tree is destroyed by the scorching drought of the African Deserts, or by the intense frost of the Polar

regions, because no tree can grow there. And in the most intolerant Countries on the Continent, no heretics are burnt, because, there, persecution has finished its work.

The wish to persecute disavowed.

And accordingly all persons agree in professing (and generally, no doubt, with sincerity) to be averse to persecution. Nebuchadnezzar, who condemned Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to the flames, and those Roman Emperors under whom so many Christian Martyrs suffered, wished them rather to save their lives by worshipping the heathen gods. And it is the same with all, down to this day, who hold the persecuting principle.

Now that principle was not renounced by most of the earliest reformers. They complained, indeed, of the persecutions they themselves were exposed to. But this was not from any doubt that heretics ought to be punished, but because they denied that *they* were heretics. Persecution they considered as consisting in penalties inflicted on those who profess the *true* Faith, which of course they held theirs to be. To put to death such as are really heretics was, in their view, no persecution.

Mitigated persecution.

By degrees it came to be perceived that this principle leads to a war of extermination among all persons of different persuasions. And men began to adopt notions more humane, but not at all consistent either with the Gospel, or in themselves. They considered it as too severe to burn heretics, or even to put them

to a less cruel death. But they thought it right to punish them by fine and imprisonment, either for refusing to profess what they did not believe, or for persisting in teaching doctrines which they felt themselves bound to propagate.*

And others, again, went further, and were for inflicting no punishment on those who do not hold the true Faith, but only excluding them from the rights of citizens; so as to secure to the 'true believers' a monopoly of civil power.

But all these different classes of persons agreed in the erroneous principle which goes to make Christ's a kingdom of this World.†

§ 6.

No connexion between the claim to infallibility and persecution.

Many persons imagine that there is a necessary connexion between these views and a belief in the infallibility of a certain Church, and of the impossibility of salvation out of it; as if no one could think it right to persecute for religious error unless he thought himself exempt from all possibility of error; and again, as if every one who does think this, must be a persecutor.

But this is quite a mistake. For, on the one hand, a man may be confident that his is the only saving faith, and that his Church is infallible—which was

* See Acts, v. 28.

† See Lesson IV. § 3. See also Note A. to Essay I., on the Kingdom of Christ.

actually the case with the Churches under the immediate care of the inspired Apostles—and yet may be convinced, like those very Apostles, that coercion in religious matters is utterly unchristian.

And, on the other hand, a civil Ruler may so far misconceive the true character of the Gospel as to think it right to compel all his subjects to profess what appears to him to be the best religion; yet without thinking his Church or himself infallible in religious matters, any more than he is infallible in *secular* matters.* Now, in these latter, no kings or senates pretend to infallibility. They make such laws as they deem the most expedient, and alter them from time to time as they see cause. But as long as those laws are unrepealed, they consider themselves (and very rightly) authorized to enforce them by penalties. If, then, they regard Religion as coming *under the province of the civil Magistrate*, they will of course apply the same rule to that also. They will feel themselves bound to take care, not only of the persons and property, but also of the souls of their subjects. They will prescribe what, in their judgment, shall appear to be the best regulations for traffic, and for keeping the peace, &c., and also the best Religion.

And perceiving (as has been observed above) the convenience of a uniformity of Worship for all their subjects, they will be likely to regard all who do not conform to that which they have established, as ene-

* See Note A., Essay I., on the Kingdom of Christ.

mies of the State; and thence to expel or to degrade them as politically dangerous.

And thus, without making any claim to religious infallibility, any more than to general legislative infallibility, they will change Christ's kingdom of Heaven into an earthly kingdom.

§ 7.

Necessity of repressing immorality and disloyalty.

It is, indeed, true that any persons whose notions in morals or in politics are such as to make it impossible they can be peaceable and loyal citizens, may allowably be excluded, not only from civil rights, but from the right of residing at all in the Country. And if there be absolutely no other way of fixing on such persons but by their professed religion, it is necessary (as long as such continues to be the case) to submit to the very great evil of making their religion a test to exclude them.*

If, for example, any one is fully convinced—in opposition to all reason and to all experience—that no Jews can possibly be good subjects, he ought to urge (not that the most unprincipled of them should be bribed by the hope of civil privileges to profess Christianity, but) that none of Jewish Race should be allowed to reside in the Country.

But to make the profession of a certain Faith a necessary qualification for civil privileges, on the ground that it is the *true* Faith, and that the Magis-

* See Paley's 'Moral Philosophy.'

trate is bound to uphold the true Faith, and to make the Church and the State one community, &c.; all this is evidently making Christ's a kingdom of this World.

Gradually, juster views of the true character of that kingdom prevailed more and more, both among Protestants and Roman Catholics. But even now, these views are far from being universally acknowledged.

Religious corruptions traceable to human nature.

To the instances that have been just noticed, others might have been added, of the same class: that is, instances of reformers retaining or reviving some of their former wrong notions or practices in some different shape. But what has been now said is sufficient to show how careful men ought to be not to flatter themselves that when once they have reformed a corrupt system, or renounced a corrupt Church, they are thenceforward safe from like corruptions. If the corruptions are such as have their origin in the nature of Man, and (as is generally the case) are rather the *cause* of the faulty system, than the *effect* of it, it is against the infirmities of human nature that we should the most watchfully guard.

§ 8.

Danger of reactions.

(2.) The other class of errors formerly mentioned as likely to be committed by reformers, are those which arise from what we called the tendency to *reaction:* that is, to 'mistake reverse of wrong for right,' and thus to rush from one fault into another contrary fault.

(i.) For example, many Christian doctrines having been corrupted by 'philosophy and vain deceit,' and mixed up with presumptuous and absurd speculations, (see Lesson VII., § 1,) the result has been, that some have been led to reject the doctrines themselves as taught in Scripture.

Rejection of Scripture doctrines.

Thus the doctrines of our Lord's divine Nature, and of his Atonement (see Lessons III. and IV.) have been by some reckoned among the early corruptions of Christianity. This was doubtless caused in a great measure by men's being disgusted with the rash metaphysical explanations of those doctrines which have been given by some who were accounted profound theologians; and which others, equally rash, have confounded with the doctrines themselves. And some have even gone so far as to represent the Apostles as having mistaken their Master's meaning as to these points, or mixed up their own fancies with his revelations; so as to have preached a different Gospel from what He designed, and to have led their followers into idolatry. For, the arrogant pretensions to a perpetual inspiration* *in the Church*, and its consequent infallibility, having been found utterly groundless, a re-action ensued, which led some to deny the inspiration of Paul

* It is perhaps necessary to remark here, that the word 'inspiration' is sometimes applied to what is called the ordinary assistance of the Holy Spirit, which is promised to all Christians. But the usual sense of the word, and that in which it has been employed in these Lessons, is, that infallible guidance bestowed on the Apostles and others, whom we are accustomed to call God's 'inspired' messengers.

himself, which he established by the miraculous 'signs of an Apostle.'*

Allegorizing of Scripture.

Some, again, have fallen into an extravagance which prevails a good deal at the present day; that of interpreting any part of Scripture they please, *allegorically*, as being what they call a 'Myth' [that is, a Parable or Fable], though stated by the Sacred Writers as a simple fact. According to these persons, Scripture is true indeed, but true only in the sense which they choose to put on it, and utterly untrue in the sense in which it was understood for many centuries, and in which the Writers *knew* that it was understood. To call this a *Revelation* is a manifest contradiction. But what such persons really mean, or really believe, no one can decide. For, by their own showing, they have so low a moral principle as to think it allowable

* The religion of Mahomet may be reckoned as one of the corruptions of Christianity, and as owing, in some degree, its origin, or at least some part of its wide diffusion, to a reaction against opposite corruptions. For, the Mahometans, though they account Mahomet a greater prophet than Jesus Christ, yet confess Jesus to be the Christ,—to have been really sent from God,—to have been superior to all who came before him,—and to have established his claim by miracles. And the chief part of the fables which they have mixed up with the Gospel history, they borrowed from some of the earliest heretics. Their religion, in short, is evidently a corrupted off-shoot from Christianity. (See Evidences, Lesson IV.)

At the time when Mahomet arose, a great part of the Christian world had fallen into saint-worship, and the adoration of pictures and images; and had also corrupted the doctrine of the Trinity into something very nearly approaching to Tritheism [the worship of three Gods]. Against these errors he vehemently protested, dwelling strongly on the Divine Unity, and on the duty of renouncing every kind of idolatry. But the principle of persecution—already admitted by most Christians—he retained and vigorously carried out. And along with the errors he rejected, he discarded also great part of the fundamentals of Christianity, besides introducing much false doctrine of his own. (See Dr. Taylor's 'History of Mohammedism.')

for a man to teach what he is conscious is false in the sense in which he *knows* it will be understood; this being the conduct they attribute to Writers whom they regard as God's messengers commissioned to instruct mankind.*

§ 9.

Mistake as to the character of the Sacred Books.

Others, again, justly considering Holy Scripture as the only sure foundation of Christian doctrine, and perceiving that to set up the authority of church-tradition as an infallible interpreter of Scripture, might make Scripture say anything whatever, so as to render 'the Word of God of none effect,—and perceiving also that to shut out the People from the reading of Scripture is a monstrous abuse,—were led into an opposite extreme. They were for discarding all catechisms and other human statements of Christian doctrine, and depriving every Church of the office of teaching. They were for simply putting the Bible into each person's hands, and leaving him to make out, by his own unassisted study of it, whatever religion he could for himself. They forgot that of all the books of the New Testament there is not one that was written for the purpose of making known the Christian Religion to those who were *quite strangers* to it. On the contrary, all those books were evidently written for the use of such as were already Christians, who had been carefully instructed [cate-

* See Dr. West's 'Discourse on Reserve,' and Essay I., on the Kingdom of Christ.

chised] and examined in the Christian Faith. (See Luke i. 4, and also Eph. i. 1, 2, &c.)

Offices of a Church and of Scripture.

It is the office of a Church to *teach*, and of Scripture to *prove*. We should study the Sacred Books carefully, as alone possessing divine authority in matters of faith. But we should study them with the best helps we can obtain; and with care not to mistake the character of them, and the purposes for which they were written. In short, we should imitate the Bereans of old, who did not refuse to hear the teachers that came among them, but 'searched the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things were so' which were taught them. (Acts, xvii. 11.)

Human teaching analogous to paper-currency.

Human teaching bears the same relation to Scripture that what is called 'paper currency' does to the precious metals. Bank-notes and bills of exchange, though of no *intrinsic* value, are a very convenient circulating-medium so long as they really *represent* gold or silver, and are payable in coin on the demand of the holder. But if these notes are made a legal tender, and are required to be received in payment, by the decree of the very government which issues them, and on its bare word, without being convertible into gold and silver, the result is, that those metals soon disappear, and men are cheated of their goods in exchange for worthless bits of paper.

Even so, as long as human teaching is really a *representative* of Scripture, and Scripture-proof is

always ready to be given, of whatever is taught, then, and then only, we are secured against the danger of having God's Word superseded by 'doctrines which are commandments of men.' (*See* Dr. Hawkins on Tradition.)

Then, again, some men's horror of the doctrine, that good works can claim merit in God's sight, and that pilgrimages to certain supposed holy spots, and various kinds of self-torture, can atone for sins, led them into the Antinomian error of the ancient Gnostics. (See Lesson VI.) They taught the doctrine of justification by [through] faith, in such a sense as to contradict the Apostle James (ii. 17–26), or at least to leave their hearers utterly careless about Christian holiness of life.

And other instances might be given of corruption of Christian doctrine, arising in great measure out of a reaction against opposite corruptions.

§ 10.

Reaction with respect to ordinances.

(ii.) With respect to religious *ordinances*, again, the burdensome and often superstitious rites with which Christian worship has been in some Churches overlaid, have created such a reaction, that some have even gone so far as to reject the Sacraments distinctly appointed by Christ Himself, and administered according to his direction by his Apostles. (1 Cor. xi. 23–26.) And the perversion of the office of Christian Ministers by those who have made them Sacerdotal

[sacrificing] Priests, has driven some into a rejection of a regular Christian Ministry altogether.

Others, again, not going quite so far, have yet thought themselves bound to reject all institutions and ordinances that are not expressly enjoined in Scripture. There had been a manifest abuse of Church authority in introducing *ordinances* and *customs* that are *contrary* to Scripture; and again, in teaching *doctrines* that are not *contained* in Scripture. And this produced a reaction, which led men to confound these two things together, and to deny the power which manifestly belongs to a Church (see Lesson V.) of making by-laws respecting matters intrinsically indifferent, and in which Scripture gives no commands.

Doctrines and ordinances to be tested by Scripture, differently.

And some reformers seem to have been led by their deep detestation of the corruptions they have protested against, to endeavour to be as *unlike* as possible to the Church from which they have revolted, even in matters indifferent: altering for the sake of change. They ought to have considered that the *presumption* is always against a change; that is, since change is not a good in itself, none should be introduced unless it can be shown to be needful, and to be a change for the better.*

It is true, we may very rightly alter or reject things, good or harmless in themselves, when they are found to be very liable to *abuse*, or when they cause unnecessary offence [scandal]. Thus 'Hezekiah

* See Preface to the Book of Common Prayer.

brake in pieces the brazen serpent which Moses had made,' when he found that the Israelites burned incense before it. And the Apostle Paul, though he decides that there was no harm in eating meats offered to idols (1 Cor. viii.), yet forbids the Corinthians to do so, when their eating it would be misapprehended and cause offence. So, also, a statue or picture of Christ, or of any eminent Christian, is not an evil in itself. But when it is found that the vulgar pay adoration to images or pictures, or that others apprehend them to be doing so, then such images should be removed from places of worship, as being a snare to weak brethren.

This, however, is no exception to the above rule, but an application of it. For in such a case, there *is* a good *reason* for the change.

§ 11.

Reaction against abuses of Church-authority.

Lastly, the usurpations and extravagant claims of a Church have driven some persons to set at nought Church-government altogether, and to overlook entirely the sanction which our Lord himself gave (see Lesson V.) to Christian communities, and the powers which He conferred on them. The erroneous and over-strained notions of Church-unity which have been above-noticed (Lessons VI. and VII.) as having contributed to maintain corruptions and to hinder reforms, afterwards led to such a violent reaction, that many thought nothing

of the guilt of Schism, and seemed even to forget that there was such a thing. And this, in turn, has sometimes produced a contrary reaction. The disgust and alarm caused by those who revolt against all rules, and discard the very notion of a Christian community, have driven others to submit to the grossest abuses of Church-authority, for the sake of good order and peace.

It is just so, that, in political affairs, also, there is a constant reaction between tyranny and anarchy; each in turn tending to produce the other.

Many more instances might be adduced: but what have been noticed are sufficient as specimens to show how watchful reformers ought to be against the tendency to reaction—against suffering incautious zeal to hurry them from one extreme into another.

In the next Lesson, we shall treat somewhat more fully of the questions relating to Church-unity.

Books from which principally the above Lesson was compiled:—

Burnet's History of the Reformation.

Burnet's Exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. Parker, Oxford.

Dr. Taylor's History of Mohammedism.

The Scholastic Philosophy Considered in its Relation to Christian Theology. The Bampton Lectures for 1832. By R. D. Hampden, D.D. (Bishop of Hereford.) Third Edition. 8vo. London: Simpkin and Marshall, Stationers' Court.

Archbishop Whately's Essays on the Errors of Romanism. (See Lesson VI.)

Archbishop Whately's Essays on Dangers to the Christian Faith. (See Lesson VI.)

Dr. West's Discourse on Reserve. (See Lesson V.)

Essay on Tradition. By E. Hawkins, D.D., Provost of Oriel College, Oxford.

And several of the books formerly referred to.

LESSON X.

CHURCH ALLEGIANCE AND SEPARATIONS.

§ 1.

Causes of delay in the correction of what is wrong.

It has been pointed out in the preceding two Lessons that the correction of abuses and corruptions in Religion has been, in most instances, resisted and long delayed; partly from an undue attention having been directed to points of *minor importance*, which has drawn off men's thoughts from very serious errors; partly from mistaken notions respecting *Church-unity*, and partly from a mistaken dread of *innovation*, causing men to overlook what are, in reality, the greatest innovations.

From these and other causes, various corruptions have often been allowed to go on unchecked by timely remedies, and to increase, till a thorough reformation was necessary; and indeed much longer. And the longer a reformation is deferred, the more difficult, and the more dangerous and violent, it is likely to be.

In particular, a reformation very long delayed is

the more liable to those two classes of evils mentioned above: [i.] the danger of retaining some of the former wrong principles, so as to revive, under a new form, the faults which had been corrected; and [ii.] the danger of *reactions*, leading men from one extreme into another.

Long continued corruptions.

[i.] For the longer any corruption has been allowed to prevail, the more it will have wrought itself into men's character, so as to have affected their mind throughout, and become, as it were, a part of themselves. And then, the same fault, substantially, will be the more likely to reappear in a different shape.

Thus, for instance, when the principle of persecution, above adverted to, had been so very long acted on, that men all over the world had been familiarised to the putting down of heresies by sword and fire, and the enforcement of the profession of the true faith by the Civil Magistrate, as an indispensable religious duty, the consequence was that reformers, even when exposed to persecution themselves, still clung to the faulty principle. They considered persecution (as was observed in Lesson IX. § 5), as consisting in punishing those who maintained the *truth*. And it was long before they came to perceive,—what Scripture so very plainly points out,—the inconsistency with Christ's religion of all use of coercion in his cause. And some remain blind to this, even down to the present day.

§ 2.

Long continued belief in infallibility.

Then, again, the great length of time that men had been accustomed to acknowledge in the Church an infallible guide on Earth, disposed them, after they had been convinced that their Church had misled them, to cling to the notion of an infallibility lodged *somewhere* on Earth, though not where it had formerly been supposed.

Long prevalence of ignorance.

And again, when *ignorance* of the true character of Christianity, resulting from the non-translation of the Scriptures, had been very widely spread and long continued, and then, persons who had had very little mental cultivation, and who had been trained from childhood in most erroneous religious notions, suddenly came to the perusal of the Scriptures (often without any assistance), it naturally happened that many of them fell into gross mistakes as to the meaning of what they read. In particular, they often mixed up together confusedly the Law and the Gospel; and often read *detached passages*, taken at random, without any reference to times, places, persons, and occasions. And thus, among many, ignorance of the true character of Christianity continued, in a great degree, to prevail, though in a new shape.

This has been often brought forward by the opponents of the Reformation, as a proof of the danger of putting the Scriptures into the hands of the People,

But if Christian Ministers had all along done their duty in training the People to an intelligent and profitable study of Scripture, this evil would have been, for the most part, prevented. Instead of this, they had kept them ignorant and uneducated, generation after generation. And mankind had been so long blindfolded, that they could not see clearly when the bandage was removed.

§ 3.

Reactions.

[ii.] And again, the longer and the more obstinately any needful reform has been resisted, the more fierce in general will be the spirit in which it is at length effected. Abuses which have been maintained long after they have been exposed and complained of, men are apt to correct with an angry and indiscriminate violence, which often leads them to rush into extremes, and to reject what is true and right, along with what is erroneous and faulty. Thus, one may sometimes see long-continued tyranny succeeded by revolutionary anarchy; and a long reign of ignorant superstition, even by avowed Atheism.

Too great extent of a single Church.

Many, also, of the evils which are apt to accompany any great religious reformation, have been increased by the *too great extent* of a single Church. The Apostles appear to have founded a distinct Church in each considerable city, as at Philippi, Thessalonica, and several other cities in

Macedonia, and elsewhere. Now, if some corruption had found its way into these Churches, and one of them—suppose Philippi—had reformed itself, although it is likely that some degree of jealousy and disapprobation would have at first arisen in the other Churches, which were as yet unreformed, and though the Philippians might have been censured as having taken a rash step, at least they could not have been denounced as schismatical *revolters*. No one could have complained that they had *separated* from a Church of which they were subjects. They could not have been viewed in the light of *rebellious children*, throwing off the yoke of an authority they had been subject to.

But when a multitude of Churches were united into one vast Community, comprehending many great Nations spread over extensive Regions, then, any reformation not embracing the *whole* of this great Church, necessarily implied *revolt* and separation.

Charges of Heresy and Schism.

Any branch of that Church which resolved to correct abuses that were obstinately maintained by the supreme central Authority, was compelled to throw off submission to that Authority, and to assert its independence. And then, those who adhered to the Church which claimed to be the Universal Church, naturally regarded the others as not only erroneous, but Heretics and Schismatics. (*See* Note to Lesson VIII., § 10.)

And such they undoubtedly *would* have been, had they separated on insufficient grounds. They had

done that which *would* have been sinful, if it had not been justified by the corruptions in essential points of Faith and Worship, which the supreme central Authority had obstinately refused to correct. This refusal transferred the sin of causing the division, from the revolters to those who made the revolt necessary.

§ 4.

Dangers from forced separation.

But of course a separation thus effected gave rise to much more hostile feelings on both sides than would have been likely to exist between Churches that had been *originally* distinct, and had always continued so; neither claiming any control over the other. Such Churches might, indeed, have been, to a certain degree, alienated from each other by differences in Doctrine or Discipline; but there would not have been the additional provocations, of a revolt and an unfriendly separation, on the one side, and a claim of supremacy on the other.

The secular power called in against Heretics.

And, accordingly, it was on the very ground of the Reformed being *Heretics* and *Schismatics* that the *secular power* was called in to reduce them by force to submission. Princes were not called on to wage war against *religious error*, merely as such; but they were urged to reduce to obedience those who had *revolted* against the Church to which they were bound to be subject. And thus religious wars and fierce persecutions, and mutual hatred, were intro-

duced, far beyond what would have been likely to arise if the original independence of numerous Churches had always continued.

When several distinct Churches had been *established in revolt*—the members of them having been compelled to *secede* from the Community they had belonged to, on account of a *disagreement* as to the fundamentals of Christianity—the result was, that the ideas of *distinctness*, and of *disagreement*, often came to be, in some measure, blended together in men's minds. There was a sort of presumption created that any Churches *independent* of each other may be expected to be at *variance*. That mutual friendly feeling and free inter-communion which prevailed in the earliest ages—when an Ephesian Christian, for instance, going to settle at Corinth,* or at any other place where there was a Christian Church, and bringing proper testimonials, was at once received as a member of that Church—were much impaired, and sometimes almost forgotten.

§ 5.

Carelessness about Schism.

And, moreover, when men had become familiarly *accustomed* to separation, from having been forced into it, they were in danger of becoming *careless* about it, and disposed to think lightly of the sin of Schism.

The like takes place in many other subjects. For instance, those who have been placed in such circum-

* Acts, xviii.

stances as to make the shedding of blood an unavoidable evil, are in danger of gradually losing their original repugnance to it, and becoming so far hardened, as to think little of sacrificing human life, even *without* necessity.

And it is the same in the matter now before us. There is always a danger that *necessary* separations may lead to others not necessary, and may have prepared men's minds to make every little difference, even on points of no vital importance, a ground for setting up new sects. The colour of a Minister's vestment,—the names of the months,—and of the days of the week,—the mode of conducting Church music,—the using or not using of a ring in matrimony—on these and such like matters, differences of opinion have been made a plea for separation.

Hostility less, among Churches originally distinct.

Now it is much less likely that this would have occurred in Churches which had not broken off from any other, but had been all along distinct Communities. For though, in any such Church, differences of opinion on minor points might have arisen, it is likely that men would have agreed to some compromise, rather than occasion hostile divisions.

It is true, indeed, that in almost every question, however insignificant, there is a better and a worse decision: and the decision of each man's own judgment will, of course, appear to himself to be the better. But in matters not essential, it is evidently a duty to yield, or to adopt a compromise, rather than

endanger Christian concord. For if each person were to draw up what might appear to himself the very best form of Church Government, and the best possible mode of expressing each Christian doctrine, and the most perfect Ritual for divine Worship, and should resolve not to belong to any Church that did not exactly adopt all these in every particular, it is plain that there would be almost as many Sects as families, and that no Christian community at all could subsist for a single year.—(*See* Lesson V., § 4.)

§ 6.

Evils resulting from hostile divisions.

But, as has been above said, when unfriendly separations had been once begun, through a necessity caused by the obstinate retaining of abuses, causeless divisions often ensued, from men's having become familiarized to divisions, and almost entirely regardless of Church-union.

And again, abhorrence of such divisions has led some Christians to adopt the system of making a State and a Church *one Community*, and assigning to the Civil Magistrate the entire control in spiritual matters, and the right of dictating to the consciences of all the citizens. And thus, under the name of 'making the State religious,' and 'providing for the greatest good of its subjects,' they make Christ's a kingdom of this World. (*See* preceding Lesson.)

With this fault, and with the endless divisions which have contributed to cause it, Reformers are

Reproaches cast on reformers.

often exultingly reproached by the advocates of the system of having one great Church which is to comprehend all Christians, and to dictate to them their faith and practice. See, they say, what are the consequences of once allowing any separation from the Church on any grounds whatever! When you have once begun, you cannot tell where to stop.

Now, in truth, that very Church from which the reformers revolted, was (as has been above pointed out) the original cause of all these evils. In the first place, by obstinately adhering to an accumulated mass of gross corruptions, it made a thorough reformation necessary. And secondly, by having absorbed into *one* Community a multitude of distinct Churches, it made *separation* a necessary part of *reformation*. And thus it not only *retarded* needful reformations, and made them more *difficult*, but also made them, when they did come, much more *hurtful*, and more exposed to the dangers which are attendant on any great reformation.

§ 7.

Grounds of separation.

As for what are, and are not such essential points as to warrant separation, it would of course be unsuitable to our present purpose to enter on the discussion of such a subject. But every one should be warned that in each question of the kind that may arise, he is bound to inquire and examine seriously, carefully,

and dispassionately; not as if it were merely a matter of taste, fancy, or convenience. We are responsible to God for the exercise of our best discretion in forming a decision. And we are bound in duty to Him, to take care neither to sacrifice the essentials of Christianity for the sake of peace, nor again, lightly and wantonly to cause divisions.

Separation, a duty or a sin.

All separation, in short, and all resistance to Church-authority, must be either a *duty* or a *sin*. Which of the two it is, in each particular instance, each must decide according to the best of his judgment; which is, after all, fallible. And in no case are we authorized to pronounce our neighbour guilty of an *unpardonable* sin. But though Christian charity requires us to make allowance for those who appear to us blameable, it is no part of charity to confound the distinctions of right and wrong; nor indeed would there be any *room* for the exercise of *charity* in judging of those whom we do *not* consider to be acting wrongly.

Private judgment.

On these and several other important questions connected with Religion, some persons are so distrustful of what they call 'private judgment,'—that is, the judgment of the generality of men, and of themselves,—that they resolve to renounce altogether the exercise of private judgment on all religious questions, and to submit themselves in everything to the judgment of their Church. They dwell much on the incompetency of most men to decide rightly on difficult points; and

consider that there is a pious humility in determining not to exercise their own judgment at all.

But they quite forget that, in the course they adopt, they do decide one most important and difficult point. A man who resolves to place himself under a certain guide to be implicitly followed, and decides that such and such a Church is the appointed infallible guide, does decide on his own private judgment, *that one* most important point, which includes in it all other decisions relative to Religion. And if, by his own showing, he is *unfit to judge* at all, he can have no ground for confidence that he has decided it rightly. And if, accordingly, he will not trust himself to judge even on this point, but resolves to consult his priest, or some other friends, and be led entirely by *their* judgment thereupon, still he does, in thus resolving, exercise his own judgment as to the counsellors he so relies on.

§ 8.

Private judgment unavoidable.

There is no need, therefore, to dispute about the *right*, or about the *duty*, of private judgment. For there is plainly an unavoidable *necessity* of private judgment, on any subject wherein we *take any serious interest*. The responsibility is one which, however unfit we may deem ourselves to bear it, we *cannot* possibly get rid of, in any matter about which we really feel an anxious care. It is vain to discuss the questions whether we *may*, or whether we *ought*

to exercise private judgment; since we *must* do so, whether we will or no.

That which often misleads men in this matter, is that we *can* refrain from exercising private judgment *on this or that particular point*, by *transferring* our judgment to some other point. For example: A sick man who is conscious of his own want of knowledge of medicine, may refrain from exercising any judgment as to the remedies he should use, and may put himself wholly in the hands of a physician: that is, he *judges* that a physician is needful, and that such and such a practitioner is worthy of confidence. Or, supposing he distrusts his own judgment on this point also, then he consults some friend whom he *judges* to be trustworthy, as to *what* physician he shall employ. In one way, or else in another, he cannot but exercise private judgment. So, also, if a man inherit a great fortune, and have a strong sense of the great responsibility attending it, and of his own unfitness to dispose of his wealth, he may resolve to make it all over to trustees, to distribute in charity at their discretion. He may have judged rightly in so doing; but it is evident he *does* judge, and does exercise an act of ownership, once for all, in thus divesting himself of his property. And if he deem himself incompetent even to the task of selecting trustees, and relies on the judgment of some friend as to what persons he shall appoint trustees, still he is exercising his judgment in the selection of that friend. The

Private judgment transferred from one point to another.

responsibility is one which he cannot shake off, do what he will.

§ 9.

Responsibilities imposed by Providence.

The man who, in the course of God's providence, comes into the possession of wealth, is, by that providence, entrusted with the stewardship of that wealth, however ill-qualified he may seem, to us, or to himself for such a charge. And, instead of murmuring or wondering at God's dispensations, or trying in vain to shake off the responsibility thus laid on him, he should set himself to do the best he can towards the fulfilment of the duty imposed on him.

And it is the same in all cases. We do and must exercise our judgment, on one point or on another in all matters except those in which we *take no interest*, and which do not occupy our thoughts. In most of the causes, for instance, which are tried in a court of justice, we do not trouble ourselves to exercise any judgment, if we know or care nothing about either plaintiff or defendant, and feel no interest in the decision.

The only mode of abstaining from private judgment.

Accordingly, if any one resolves that he will not exercise any judgment on religious matters, and really does consistently keep to that rule, not deceiving himself (as many do) in the way just above noticed, by judging on one point instead of another, he will find that there is

only one possible way of complying with that rule—namely, by *withdrawing his attention* as much as possible from the whole subject, except as far as regards outward forms and observances, and refraining altogether from considering the questions, what the Christian Religion is, and whether there is any truth in it.

And there are not a few who really do, in this way, abstain from exercising any judgment at all in religious matters, and are content to do and say just what they have been accustomed to, without any serious reflection on the subject. But even so, they do not escape responsibility. For we are responsible, not only for doing, but also for leaving undone: else, the servant who hid his Lord's talent in the earth would have escaped condemnation.

§ 10.

How private judgment should be exercised.

Of course it is not meant that on any important point a man ought to make up his mind, unassisted, and without consulting those whom he may consider to be intelligent and well-informed, and upright advisers. Only, let him not deceive himself by imagining that he *can* forego *all* exercise of his own judgment in any matter about which he has a real and anxious care.

And on the other hand, we should guard against the opposite mistake of supposing that whatever is left to our *discretion* is, therefore left to our *caprice*

and may be decided on at random. We may *have a right* to do many things which we should not *be right* in doing. For instance, when any bill is brought into Parliament, each member has an undoubted right to vote for it or against it; but it would be absurd to say that he would *be equally right* in doing either. It is in such cases, and in such alone, that there is room for the exercise of any such quality as good sense, wisdom, discretion, &c. For, in matters quite *indifferent* — as, for example, which of two similar sheets of paper we shall begin writing on — there is clearly no exercise of judgment in deciding. Nor, again, is there any room for it in matters that are already decided for us, and in which we have *no choice*: as, for instance, when a judge has to declare what the law *actually* is on such and such a point. But when a legislator is called on to decide what the law *ought* to be, and, in short, in every case where we have to decide, and where there may be a better or a worse decision, it is then, and then only, that there is room for the exercise of good sense.

When good sense is needful.

We should keep in mind, then, that as the exercise of our own judgment (in matters in which we feel a deep interest) is, on the one hand, *unavoidable*, so it is, on the other hand, *responsible*. We are bound to use, to the best of our power, such faculties and opportunities as God's providence may have bestowed on us, in judging of any question pertaining to Religion; and among others, in any question as to separation.

§ 11.

When blame attaches to the rulers of a Church.

But though, as we have already said, much blame attaches to those who hastily, and on slight grounds, separate from their Church; a Church, on the other hand, is not exempted from a share of blame, which *narrows* too much its terms of communion. *Some* terms, of course, are indispensable; since persons differing as to the fundamentals of Christian Doctrine and Worship cannot possibly be members of the same Christian-Community. But care should be taken not to go beyond what is necessary. If possible, none should be excluded of those who can join in Christian Worship together, and receive instruction together in the essential truths of the Gospel. To multiply Articles of Faith and Ordinances, unnecessarily, manifestly tends to create divisions.

Tenderness for weak brethren.

And it is not enough to say that these Articles are, all, such as we are convinced are scriptural, and that none of our Ordinances are contrary to Scripture, and that the scruples of those who object to them are unfounded and frivolous. All this may be true; and it may be true that those are to blame who on such grounds separate from the Church; yet this does not clear from blame those who put a stumbling-block in the way of weak brethren (see Romans, xiv. 21), by insisting on points that are not essential, and

on which persons may differ who are yet capable of worshipping together as Members of the same Christian Church. 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.' (Rom. xiv. 1–7.)

§ 12.

Terms of communion.

It is to be observed, however, that when we speak of points that are and that are not 'essential,' we mean, in this place, essential as terms of *communion*, not of *salvation*. For there are some points of disagreement which would completely prevent men from being Members of the same Church, though hardly any, of either party, would regard the other as under a fatal error.

Disagreements as to Church endowments.

For example, there are persons irreconcilably opposed on the subject of Church-endowments. Some of the advocates of what is called 'the voluntary system' [the maintenance of each Minister by the voluntary contributions of his Congregation] consider it as not only objectionable, but utterly unlawful, to attend what they call a *hired* Ministry*—that is, one maintained by endowments. And the other party, though not holding it absolutely *unlawful* for a Minister to be dependent on the volun-

* More properly called *un*hired; being supported, not like a labourer by the wages of his employer, but by endowments similar to those of many Hospitals, Colleges, &c.

tary contributions of his People (since 'the labourer is worthy of his hire,'*) yet consider this so very *undesirable*, that they would feel bound always to support and promote the system of endowments.† Now these two parties could hardly continue Members of the same Church. And yet neither need regard the other as having abandoned the fundamentals of Christianity.

Forms of extemporary prayer, and of stated forms, prayer.

The same may be said of an irreconcilable disagreement as to the use of in Public Worship. Some consider the use of any form, even the Lord's Prayer, as not allowable. Others, again, believe that a special promise is made to the *joint* [common] prayers of a Congregation who '*agree together* touching something they shall ask in Christ's name;' and that, accordingly, they are bound to pray *together* (either audibly or mentally), and not merely to *listen* to the prayers offered up by another. And they hold it to be impossible, in most cases, that a Congregation can so constantly go along with all that is said by an extemporary speaker, as to *accompany*—properly speaking—his prayers; that is, so as not only to *understand* and *approve* what he says, but to make his prayers *their own prayers also* at the moment. These prayers, accordingly, will generally be, they conceive, rather of the character of exhortations addressed to the

* Luke, x. 7.

† See 1 Cor. ix; see also Sermon (the 16 in the vol.) on Philipp. i. 4, 5; see also Archbishop Whately's Sermons (S. 16th..]

People by the Minister, than of joint prayers addressed *by* the People to God.

Now persons strongly impressed with these opposite notions could not be united in one Church, though they may not regard each other as fatally in error.

§ 13.

What Church has the claim to allegiance.

It has been above said that a man is deeply responsible for the sin of Schism, if he should, without evident and strong necessity, separate from his Church. But some have doubted *what* Church it is that has this general claim to his allegiance: whether [i.] that which is established by law; or [ii.] that which his ancestors formerly belonged to; or [iii.] that in which he himself has been brought up.

[i.] As for the first of these, the Religion established by law, has not, on *that* ground, any claim on the conscience. A Member, for example, of the Church of England becomes a *dissenter* if he settle in Scotland, where the Presbyterian Kirk is established, or in some parts of the Empire where the Roman Catholic Religion is established. But if he is conscientiously a Member of his own original Church, and sees no reason to consider it unscriptural, he has no right to forsake it on political grounds.

* See Letter to a Clergyman of the Diocese of Dublin on Extemporary prayer.

[ii.] As for the Church to which one's ancestors may have belonged, no one should think himself bound to investigate obscure and difficult questions of history, and to judge of all the acts of those who founded or reformed his Church, perhaps several centuries ago, in order to decide whether he is permitted, or whether he is bound, to continue in the Church in which he was brought up. If those founders separated unreasonably, *they* indeed were chargeable with the sin of Schism. But it would be to create a fresh Schism, if he were to forsake the Church he was brought up in, not from feeling any objection to its Doctrines or Worship, but merely on the ground that its original formation was not justifiable.

The Church of one's ancestors.

And a like principle is universally recognised in all civil affairs. Else, indeed, the whole World would be filled with perpetual rebellions and civil wars. For example, Norway was formerly united, not to Sweden, but to Denmark. Normandy, again, and other provinces of France, and also the North American States, formerly belonged to England; and Ireland formerly consisted of several independent Kingdoms. But if a Norman were to hold that he owed no allegiance to the French Government, or an American to that of the United States, and so on, unless every such separation and annexation could be proved originally justifiable, and if every man were to think himself authorized, on such grounds, to raise revolt, there would be hardly such a thing as a peaceable Government on Earth.

Allegiance to one's own Church.

[iii.] Each man therefore owes allegiance, generally, to the Church in which he has been brought up, unless he find this incompatible with his reverence for God's Word, and his obedience to the divine Will.

§14.

Separations unconnected with disagreement.

Independently, however, of any *disagreement*, a separation may take place with the consent of all parties, of one Branch of a Church from the rest, merely from reasons of convenience, and without any interruption of harmony and inter-communion, any more than among the several distinct Churches originally founded by the Apostles. For example, this took place with the American Episcopalian Church, which formerly was a portion of the Church of England. When the American States became politically independent, the inconvenience of having one Church whose members were citizens of different political Communities, was so plain to all parties, that a friendly separation was agreed on. And if this had been done long before, by mutual consent, merely on the ground of the inconvenient *distance* between the two Countries, no one could have had any right to find fault with the measure. For, any union or separation that is made by mutual consent, is evidently a matter which the parties concerned have a full right to determine for themselves.

Separation without mutual consent.

But difficult questions may arise when both parties do *not* thus agree; those who desire to form themselves into a distinct Church being opposed by the rest. Suppose, for instance, that on the occasion just alluded to, the English Church had refused to consent to the independence of the American, and had insisted on retaining control over them. In any such case, those desiring to secede should, in the first place, satisfy themselves, on careful consideration, that the evils they seek to remedy are not only real, but great, and likely to interfere with the objects for which Churches exist. Next, they should, respectfully, and in a spirit of kindness, set forth their reasons, and listen candidly to what may be urged on the opposite side. And if they see no reason to alter their opinion, they should still remonstrate earnestly and perseveringly, before they take the extreme step of seceding without the consent of their brethren.

In these, however, and in all similar matters, it is impossible to lay down rules such as will at once apply to every case that may arise. There must always be room for the exercise of sound judgment and candour, in deciding on each particular question.

§ 15.

General principle, as to cases of necessity.

There is one principle, however, which should always be kept in mind, and which, obvious as it is, men often lose sight of in practice; namely, that

a *necessity* imposed by external circumstances, and for which we are not responsible, will justify, and call for such measures as *would* be sinful if there were no such necessity. We should be careful, therefore, not to commit either [i.] the error of censuring men for doing what would, in ordinary circumstances, be wrong, or [ii.] the error of supposing ourselves at liberty to do, at any time and under any circumstances, whatever has, in some particular case, been justifiably and rightly done.

Case of political necessities.

In the ordinary affairs of life, this principle is in general well understood and acted on. For example, for a number of men, citizens of any State, to assemble, and, by their own authority, declare themselves a Senate, and proceed to elect Magistrates, and enact Laws, and establish a Government, would justly be regarded as a most heinous act of rebellion; and all their laws, &c. (however good in themselves), would be evidently null and void. But if a number of persons were to find themselves wrecked on a desert island, or the sole survivors of a pestilence, or in some other way left to themselves, no one would contend that they were bound thenceforward to live in a state of anarchy, because they had no legitimate Rulers or Laws. They would be authorized and bound to agree, as well as they could, in establishing some sort of Government. And the Laws and Magistrates thus appointed would have as good a claim to obedience as those of any country in the World; because it is plainly necessary to human welfare, and

agreeable to the divine Will, that men should live under a regular Government. Yet this case would afford no precedent for any persons who should take upon them to break up an existing Community, and to revolt against 'the Powers that be.'

§ 16.

Case of ecclesiastical necessity.

So also, if the persons thus situated were to find themselves without regularly ordained Clergy, or without any except such as they were fully convinced had abandoned the genuine Doctrines of the Gospel, it would be absurd to suppose it could be the Will of their Heavenly Master that they should remain for ever destitute of a Christian Ministry and Church-ordinances. They would clearly be conforming to the spirit of his injunctions, in forming themselves into a Church, and appointing various orders of Ministers, selecting the best qualified persons they could find, for each office, and establishing Church-regulations according to the best of their judgment. And the necessity under which they were placed would justify, and render valid, all their acts and appointments; supposing them always not to be in themselves superstitious or unscriptural. But such a case would afford no fair precedent for persons differently circumstanced, who should take upon themselves, wantonly and without necessity, to ordain Ministers and set up themselves as a new Church.

Extreme cases and general rules.

So, also, there may be extreme cases of such cruel and intolerable oppression as to justify subjects in revolting against an established Government. But extreme cases do not destroy the authority of a general rule, though they may authorize an exceptional departure from it. And it is undoubtedly true, as a general rule, that we are in duty bound to submit to existing Governments.

Again, if the loyal portion of a garrison were to revolt from a general, who had turned traitor, and was betraying the city into an enemy's hands, so far from being treasonable in thus revolting, they would have been abettors of treason if they had not. And yet the general rule is, that soldiers are bound to obey their commander.

In like manner, submission to Church-authority, and the preservation of Church-union, are the rule; and resistance, or separation, the exception. The burden of proof lies with those who undertake to justify a departure from a rule. And if they do thus justify themselves, their case affords no fair precedent for those who would introduce general discord and confusion.

§ 17.

Legitimate remedies for evils.

It is to be observed, however, that when we speak of the general claim to obedience, which the Laws of any Community—civil or ecclesiastical—have on its Members,

this does not imply such a blind veneration as should withhold us from seeking any needful amendment. Any one who scorns the absurdity of attributing infallibility to human Beings, would be himself guilty of a still greater absurdity, if, while considering all men as fallible, he should yet act as if they were *in*fallible, by insisting that all their institutions, and regulations should be like the Laws of the Medes and Persians, which could never be changed; and that no one should ever inquire whether amendment in any point be possible and needful. All wanton and hasty changes, indeed, should, in all subjects, be avoided; the presumption being—as has been above said—against every alteration. And a man's veneration for any existing Constitution—whether in Church or in State—may reasonably lead him to deprecate any fundamental change. But the best security against this—in short, against revolution—is, the constant correction of abuses, and the introduction of improvements as they are needed. It is the neglect of timely *repairs* (as was remarked above) that makes *rebuilding* necessary.

Confidence produced by timely remedies.

And, moreover, the amendment of any Law that is faulty, tends (besides the immediate benefit) to increase men's confidence in those that are left unchanged; and in this way contributes to the stability of the whole system. For it creates a presumption that what is left unchanged, is so left for some good and sufficient *reasons*, and not from a mere blind determination against *any* change, whether for the worse or for the better.

§ 18.

Mistaken inference from the imperfections of laws.

Some persons, however, there are, who are far from thinking all existing laws (civil or ecclesiastical) faultless; and who, on that ground, hold themselves at liberty to disobey or evade any that they think objectionable. But if they are called on to exert themselves to procure, in a regular way, a remedy for the evil, they will shrink from the trouble, or expense, or odium, they might thus incur for the public good. There are many, for example, who, from their disapprobation of the existing revenue-laws, or game laws, &c., will violate these without scruple, when they can do so with impunity. But when urged to exert themselves in perseveringly calling the attention of the Legislature to these Laws, they will plead that it is no concern of theirs, but only of their Rulers.*

And they act in the same way with respect to Church-regulations; disregarding without scruple any that they disapprove; but refusing to take any pains for the regular correction of anything they complain of.

Duty in reference to existing laws.

But a truly conscientious and right-minded man will pursue exactly the opposite course. As long as a Law *exists*, he will feel bound to obey it, as

* See Dr. Arnold's Sermons on the Interpretation of Scripture. Sermon on Rom. xiii.

far as he can with a safe conscience. But if he consider it an *unwise* law, he will exert himself to have it amended by competent authority; or, if necessary to have some competent authority *appointed* for the purpose of rectifying whatever may be amiss. These exertions may, perhaps, cost him much more trouble and discomfort than he, individually, suffers from the existing state of things. But he will not hesitate to sacrifice his own immediate personal comfort and ease, for the lasting benefit of his Countrymen and fellow-Christians. For, a true Christian is most emphatically and pre-eminently public-spirited. 'None of us,' says the Apostle Paul, 'liveth unto himself.'—(Rom. xiv. 7.)

The object of these Lessons, you will observe, was not either to prove the divine origin of Christianity, or to give an exposition of Christian Doctrine, or to defend any particular Church; but (according to their title) to furnish an Introduction to the History of Religious Worship—an outline of what God has 'at sundry times and in divers manners'* done for Man, in this respect, and again, of what Man, on his part, has done, in the use or the abuse of the divine Dispensations.

Incidentally, however, some proofs have been brought forward of Christianity generally, and of some particular Christian Doctrines; and some errors which have, at various times, prevailed in the World,

* Heb. i. 1.

have been occasionally noticed. But the main and primary object has been to set forth, as clearly as could be done in a very brief sketch, the course which men's minds have actually taken on the subject of Religion.

As for the actual state of mankind, in regard to religious profession, at this time, or at any other, it is impossible to make a calculation that shall even approach to perfect accuracy, of the comparative numbers of persons of each persuasion. For, in the first place there are many countries of which the actual *population* cannot be calculated except by a rough guess. 2ndly. There are many countries whose population is very rapidly *increasing*. For instance, in great part of North America, the population is above double what it was at the beginning of this Century. And 3rdly, in many Countries there is such an *intermixture* of persons of different religions, that it is impossible to ascertain exactly their comparative numbers.

But it is computed by those who have made careful inquiries, that, of about 980 millions—which is supposed to be the total population of the Globe—about 600 millions are Pagans: differing, indeed, widely from each other in their religions, but all of them strangers to any true revelation. Of the remaining 380 millions, who acknowledge the divine Authority of the Mosaic Law, about four millions is supposed to be the number of the unconverted Jews. The remainder acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ and was the founder of a true Religion. (See Lesson

IX., § 8, note; and Evidences, Lesson IV.) But, of these, the Mahometans do not profess themselves followers of Christ, but of Mahomet, whom they regard as a greater prophet. These are computed at 96 millions. The professed Christians are supposed to amount to 280 millions. And of these, the Members of the Greek and other Churches that were never subject to that of Rome, are reckoned at about 52 millions: and the Protestants—that is, all those Christians, of various denominations, whose ancestors were once subject to the Church of Rome, at about 68 millions.

The last two together, therefore, make a total of 120 millions of Christians independent of the Church of Rome; the members of which Church are computed at about 160 millions.

That Church, therefore, though it is not, nor ever was, properly *universal* [catholic] in the sense of *actually* comprising *all*—or nearly all—professed Christians, yet reckons among its members a decided majority—above four-sevenths of the whole.

And, according to the above calculations, the Pagans, and others who do not profess Christianity, amount to above two-thirds of the Human Race.

It is a melancholy thought that so large a number of our fellow-creatures should remain in ignorance and superstition. And we can no more explain or understand why this sad state of things should so long have been permitted, than we can that great mystery of which this is a *part*—the existence of any EVIL at all in the Universe.

But it is worth observing, that (as you may learn from books of Geography, History, and Travels) the Pagan Nations, who are strangers to all revelation, are, as a general rule, the most uncivilized of mankind; and that, of all other Nations, each will (generally speaking) be found to be the more civilized, and the further advanced in general knowledge, in the arts of life, and in good government and rational liberty, in proportion as it approaches nearer to the genuine Religion of the Gospel as taught in Scripture. Thus, the testimony of Mankind—*so far forth as* men are intelligent, enlightened, civilized, and moral beings—appears to be strongly in favour of that Religion. (See the last three pages of Note A., to Essay I., On the Kingdom of Christ.) And we may expect that, as a general rule, the diffusion of real civilization, and of genuine Religion, will favour and accompany each other.

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And several of the works formerly referred to.

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